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THE CENTENARY OF THE BATTLE OF PLATTSBURG

SEPTEMBER
6 - TO - 11

1814

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

—THE STATE—
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
—ALBANY—

1914

EXCHANGE

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From an old print

The battle on Lake Champlain, 1814

The Centenary of the Battle of Plattsburg

1814 September 11 1914

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

At Plattsburg, N. Y.

September 6 to 11, 1914

Published under the auspices of the
State Historian

Albany
The University of the State of New York
1914

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

G. E. P.

Prefatory

IT seems fitting and proper that this year the people of the Empire State should celebrate the valors of the war which gave us peace, particularly those of the notable and critical Battle of Plattsburg. That event is at once a reminder of a glorious victory and the preface of one hundred years of peace with our transoceanic brethren. This publication, issued by direction of the President of The University of the State of New York, and under the auspices of the Division of History of the University, aims to set forth reasons why the State should observe this occasion, and how it is to be done.

Last year the victory of Commodore Perry on the Great Lakes was made the occasion of a national, even an international, celebration. Important as was this victory, it was not more so, nor were its results more far-reaching, than that of Macdonough on the green waters of Champlain, in 1814.

It is in order that New York may the better realize the import of this battle, and this magnificent victory of a few determined Americans, that this celebration has been planned and this announcement printed.

If a greater pride in their heritage, a more patriotic spirit, and a more sincere devotion to the memories of their historic past shall be aroused in New Yorkers by the centenary, and if this booklet shall in any way contribute to that result, the Division of History will feel its work well done, and be amply compensated for the thought, labor and time devoted to this enterprise.

JAMES A. HOLDEN
State Historian and
Chief, Division of History

457903

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The Movement for Centennial Observance

MARCH 28, 1912 the State Senate adopted the following resolution, offered by Senator Franklin D. Roosevelt:

Resolved (if the Assembly concur), That a committee of four be appointed, consisting of two senators, to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and two members of the Assembly, to be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, to consider the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Plattsburg, both on land and on Lake Champlain. That such committee report to the Legislature on or before the 15th day of January 1913, regarding suitable plans and arrangements for the celebration and commemoration of said battle. That the actual and necessary expenses of said committee in carrying out the provisions of this resolution, not exceeding the sum of fifteen hundred dollars, shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Legislature on the warrant of the Comptroller and a certificate of the chairman of the committee.

The Assembly concurring, four members of the Legislature were appointed, namely, Senators Franklin D. Roosevelt and James A. Emerson, Assemblymen Spencer G. Prime and Charles J. Vert. March 12, 1913 the committee submitted a report (Senate no. 45), in which the observance of the hundredth anniversary of the battle, as well as the erection of a permanent memorial, was suggested, and the creation of a commission recommended. A bill, introduced by Assemblyman Vert, providing for the creation of the Plattsburg Centenary Commission, was passed, and received executive approval May 24th. The commission was originally composed of fifteen members, five citizens appointed by the Governor, five senators chosen by the President of the Senate, and five assemblymen selected by the Speaker; and the object of its creation was " to plan and conduct in the month of September 1914 an appropriate public celebration of the centenary of the Battle of Plattsburg, to provide for the participation of the State of New York therein, including any entertainment, celebration or

public function held during such celebration or in connection therewith." The act carried an appropriation of $5000.

December 29th a bill was signed by Governor Glynn increasing the number of commissioners from fifteen to eighteen. April 3, 1914 an act was approved by which the commission is empowered, " by itself, or in cooperation with the government of the United States, to provide for, erect and establish a suitable memorial to Thomas Macdonough in the city of Plattsburg, New York." The sum of $125,000 was allowed for the erection of such a memorial and for the other purposes specified by law.

Vermont has created a commission, of which the Governor of the state is a member, and appropriated $4000 for the construction of a permanent memorial; and it is the desire of this commission to cooperate with the New York commission and the federal authorities in the celebration of the battle and the erection of memorial structures.

During the year the additional members of the commission have been named, and the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mortimer C. O'Brien, of White Plains, was filled by the appointment of Dr Alexander W. Fairbank. The personnel of the commission and its officers as now constituted, will be found elsewhere in this pamphlet. The commission will give to the press and public details of the final program.

At the mouth of the Saranac overlooking scene of Macdonough's victory

From an old print

Land battle of Plattsburg, 1814

The Battle of Plattsburg[1]

BY JAMES AUSTIN HOLDEN

WITH the possible exception of Lake George, no other inland lake in the world has so much history attached to it as Champlain, or has been the object of so great contention. Adirondacks and Iroquois, Dutch and French, English and Americans have striven in turn for the mastery and dominion of this sheet of water.

Crown Point and Ticonderoga, Champlain and Jogues, Dieskau and Montcalm, Lord Howe and Amherst, Rogers the Ranger and St Luc the Partisan, Stark and Putnam, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold, Philip Schuyler and Horatio Gates, St Clair and Burgoyne have all added a particular and peculiar luster to the story of Champlain, which, like the sunlight playing on the burnished surface of a warrior's shield, all but blinds the eyes of the historian to the fact that any important event could possibly occur elsewhere.

With the causes which led up to the War of 1812, with the apathy of New England, with the forcing upon New York and its great war governor, Daniel D. Tompkins, of the necessity of protecting its frontiers and of standing, practically alone, the brunt of almost three years of fighting, this sketch, in its limited scope, must not treat.

Of Perry's great victory on Lake Erie, whose centenary was celebrated last year, of the attempts, successful and unsuccessful, of our soldiers and militia in western New York, of the horrors which accompanied the campaigns from 1812 to 1815, of the many interesting incidents, traditions and stories which cluster around and are part

[1] Extracts from address delivered before the Lake Champlain Association of New York City, December 9, 1913.

of the annals of those campaigns, of the soldiers and men who made and lost reputations for bravery and skill during that time, volumes could be written. But at this time all this can be treated only as a prelude to that dramatic event whose scenes, with the playwright's license, we are about to transfer to the mobile platform of Lake Champlain. That lake, with its beautiful setting of wind-ruffled pines, its broad headlands and rocky bluffs, its great, green islands, its down-sloping shores and curved arms encircling the deep-tinted waters of the bay, whose newly erected fortifications protected the old-fashioned houses, of which but seven remain, and the straggling clusters of huts and dwellings, formed the backdrop of this mighty spectacle.

If " coming events cast their shadows before," we may well wonder what were the visions seen by Judge Zephaniah Platt, when, in 1784, he came from Dutchess county to establish his location of 18,000 acres upon the old

From a water color by Richbell Smith

Quartermaster-general's headquarters, 1814

De Fredenberg tract of land, which had been forfeited to the State as a result of the Revolution. After this land had been acquired by the thirty-two proprietors, including among others the numerous Platts as well as Philip Schuyler, Zephaniah Platt became a sort of patroon and with his brothers established the beginnings of the future city of Plattsburg, the first town meeting being held June 16, 1785, at the house of Judge Charles Platt, the patroon's brother.

It was undoubtedly farthest from the thoughts of that pioneer that his name was to go down in history, linked with the title of one of the most successful and unique military events which have ever been recorded by the annalist. In fact, it may well be questioned whether, in any clime or age, there have been recorded many really decisive events in which a naval victory, overwhelming in its character, has been accompanied almost simultaneously by an equally deciding success on land.

Thus, perhaps, by as wandering and crooked trails as those used by the " Romans of the West " to approach Lake Champlain, we come to the subject of this paper, " The Battle of Plattsburg," or, as it is also called, the " Battle of Lake Champlain," or, as Dawson prefers to name it, " The Second Invasion of New York."

Here, in passing, let me say that during the wars in which she has been engaged, there must have been a special providence appointed to look after our country. For none of her battles, either on land or sea, have apparently been won by the superior knowledge, skill or ability displayed by the committees, officers or bureaucrats who have been at the head of military and naval affairs during the period of growth and expansion. Fortunate indeed, however, has she been in the men who have made up the fighting force of her army and navy during that period, from general to private from admiral to jack tar.

Some time during the early part of 1814, Sir George Prevost, Governor General of Canada, determined to invade New York, following the plans originally laid out by General Burgoyne in 1777. In July, Governor Tompkins issued an order that 13,500 of the militia of the State of New York be detached, equipped and held in readiness for actual service, prepared to march at a moment's notice. From that time on there was more or less activity among the militia of the State. It may be of passing interest to know that in those far-away days, it was the duty of one Washington Irving, lieutenant colonel and aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, to issue orders to the quartermasters of the various brigades to execute bonds under the direction of Samuel Edmunds, principal paymaster of the militia.

Although the plan of General Prevost was evidently known to the inhabitants of New York for several weeks previous to the Battle of Plattsburg, both sides being well supplied with spies, partisans, traitors and deserters, with that blind fatuity which has characterized most of our military preparations since the beginning, the then secretary of war ordered Major General George Izard to the assistance of Major General Jacob Brown on the Niagara frontier. In spite of the vigorous protests of General Izard, he was forced to leave Plattsburg at the head of 4000 troops, going by way of the then new State road to the old trail, over Lakes Champlain and George and by way of Saratoga and the Mohawk valley to Sacketts Harbor, where he arrived about September 15th, and did splendid service at that end of the State. He left behind, under the command of Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, only about 1500 effective men to protect the whole Champlain frontier, along with some sick and convalescent.

General Izard's forces had hardly taken up their march when couriers came dashing into Plattsburg, warning the authorities that General Brisbane, the

Painted by Samuel L. Waldo, A. N. A., 1815

Brigadier General Alexander Macomb

From an oil painting in the City Hall, New York

Photo by Mrs. Weaver

Northeast from Cumberland head

British commander, was encamped with the advance guard of the enemy on the north side of the Great Chazy; and that Sir George Prevost was following with his combined force, amounting to 15,000 well-disciplined troops. Among these were some of the most able veterans and the seasoned continental flower of the English army, fresh from their triumphs over Napoleon. This was August 31st, and on the same day, it is stated by Governor Tompkins, Major General Benjamin Mooers, in command of the militia, ordered out the militiamen of Clinton, Essex and Franklin counties in a body to resist the invasion of the British. Mounted couriers were despatched in all directions to alarm and call out the militia in the surrounding villages. In anticipation of some such movement on the part of the British, the volunteers had been holding themselves in readiness, and soon Washington and Warren counties, and the nearby portion of Saratoga county, were practically depopulated of their able-bodied citizens, who were soon on their way to Plattsburg. They were speedily followed by the men of Montgomery, Schoharie and Rensselaer counties. At the same time like situations were developing in Vermont. We are told how the old muskets were taken from the wall, powder molds made ready, and nights spent in heating the lead and casting the bullets

for the old guns. Governor Chittenden called for volunteers, as he could not order his men outside the state, and there was a generous response to his summons to arms. It is true that some of these militia forces did not get nearer Plattsburg than Whitehall, N. Y., Burlington, Vt., or the shore of the lake. A number of companies being unable to cross the lake on account of the want of transportation facilities, watched the ensuing fight as spectators, having shown their patriotism and good will.

As exhibiting loyalty and devotion to country, if not good military sense, it was related that a party of fifty from Stowe, Vt., marched all night without rations, guns or ammunition, poorly clad and slightly shod, through the mud and rain to their rendezvous. The following interesting account of their experiences, given in Hemenway's "Vermont Gazetteer," is no doubt typical of many that relate to that period:

After ascertaining who was going to cross the lake, they drew their rations. The eatable was wheat bread. They procured some pork and beef, and a large kettle for boiling it; and had but half boiled it, when the drum called them to march to the wharf, to be ready for crossing. They put their half-cooked meat in bags, and some of the men swung them over their shoulders, and as they walked, the grease dropped down their backs on to their heels. The loaves of bread, which were very large, were carried by thrusting a stick through them, and shouldering them. On their way to the wharf, they drew their guns, which had just been returned from Montpelier, where they had been sent for greater safety. Friday night, about sundown, as many as could went aboard the Watercraft which was to convey them across the lake. This craft was an open-top sail boat with much the appearance, when viewed from the shore, of a common sheep-yard. Up to this time, the men had eaten little or nothing that day. When the boat had been sailing about two hours, it was be-calmed and began to leak. The men were called upon, and to make any considerable progress, were obliged to bail and row by turns. Saturday morning about daybreak, they reached "Ketcham's Landing," in Peru, as they did not choose to go direct to Plattsburg.

Painted by G. Freeman

Photo by Bigelow

Commodore Thomas Macdonough

Presented to Madame DeLord, and now in old DeLord mansion, Plattsburg

Even for some days after the battle, the militiamen continued to come into Plattsburg in response to the call to arms.

This army of militiamen must have been a weird and wonderful sight, fresh from the farms and fields, ignorant of tactics, generally unprovided with arms or ammunition; such was the force gathered together to oppose the splendidly drilled and equipped veterans of the British, with their skilled officers. No wonder some of them wavered in the first skirmish, although General Macomb in his official report stated that "the militia behaved with great spirit after the first day, and the volunteers of Vermont [under General Samuel Strong] were exceedingly serviceable." The later precipitate and unreasonable panic and flight of the British, however, evened up all scores in this respect.

On account of previous happenings on the lake, to Thomas Macdonough, a master commandant and young naval officer of promise, had been intrusted the command of the naval forces on Lake Champlain, his headquarters to be at Plattsburg bay. Within forty days from the time the trees had been felled in the forests of Vermont, his flagship, the *Saratoga*, was launched and had been armed with her eight long 24's, her eighteen carronades and smaller guns. Attached to his fleet were the brig *Eagle*, the schooner *Ticonderoga*, the sloop *Preble*, and ten galleys or "gunboats." All these vessels, except the *Eagle*, were ready for service by the latter part of May.

Returning for a moment to the land, we find the forces of General Prevost in commission, and on the 1st of September find Brisbane's brigade occupying Odelltown, in Quebec, near the border of New York. Two days later the British, under Prevost, appeared in force before Champlain, General Alexander Macomb's small American force retiring from it. The next day an

Headquarters of General Macomb

Home of Gen. Benjamin Mooers until 1838. Originally of wood, now brick veneer

advance was made upon Chazy without opposition. On the 5th, however, Prevost began to find obstructions in the way, trees felled and bridges removed by the order of General Macomb, while at Sampson's, eight miles from Plattsburg, the general and his troops remained until morning. Macomb's 1500 effective men by this time had fallen back on Plattsburg and, as they arrived, assisted by the New York militia under General Mooers and the Vermont volunteers under General Strong, about 2500 in all, finally completed their defenses on the southern bank of the Saranac. Within a sort of triangle, the front and right flanks were covered by the Saranac and the lake, and the left by a ravine running from the bend of the stream nearly to the lake. Here within the triangle had been erected Forts Moreau, Brown and Scott, commanded by Colonel Mel. Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Storrs and Major Vinson respectively.

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Isaac C. Platt house

Headquarters of General Robertson, Beekmantown road. Used by British as a hospital

Near the mouth of the Saranac and the lake, a block-house and a battery were built, while another block-house stood at the south of the ravine, midway between the river and the lake.

On the morning of the 6th, Prevost began his grand advance with his 14,000 troops, nearly all, as has been stated, seasoned veterans. The fighting really began on the 6th, when Major Wool, afterward the heroic general of the Mexican War, and some from the regular volunteers, began skirmishing on the Beekmantown road, where at Ira Howe's house the first encounter was had. Then came the affair of Culver's hill, the fearful artillery punishment of the British at Halsey's Corners by Captain Leonard's battery, the death of Lieutenant Colonel Willington, and the first loss of the Americans. Of the punishment of the enemy, as the small detachments of Lieutenant Colonel Appling and Captain Sproul fell back to the main body, their riflemen disputing

every step of the way; of the vigorous defense of the lower bridge by Martin J. Aiken's volunteers, all crack shots and eager to fight; of the bravery of the British regulars at this spot, as with unbroken step they marched over their dead and dying, closing up ranks as fast as the boys' rifle fire destroyed the formation; of the holding of the upper bridge by General Mooers and his men, but briefest mention can be made. During that day the British lost over two hundred men, while the Americans' loss was only forty-five.

From the 6th to the 11th Prevost was busy bringing up his artillery, placing his men, and hustling Captain Downie with the preparation of the British fleet.

The exploit of Captain McGlassin, at the head of fifty volunteers, in spiking the guns at the rocket battery opposite Fort Brown, and in putting to flight, by a stratagem, three hundred veteran soldiers, deserves more than passing mention, inasmuch as it is said to have "greatly annoyed" the British commander-in-chief.

On the approach of the British, with their light dragoons, rocketeers, sappers and miners, chasseurs and voltigeurs, their Swiss regiment, light infantry and regulars, a truly impressive and terrifying force, the comparatively few American troops drew up the planks of the bridge, making breastworks, from which they disputed the passage of the Saranac. Several attempts to cross it were made by the British, but they were uniformly defeated. As soon as the battle began on the lake, the American forces opened fire, which was returned by the batteries and rocketeers of the British, which threw hundreds of shells, balls and rockets. In his general orders, issued September 14th, General Macomb says: "The enemy's fire was returned with effect from our batteries and by sunset we had the satisfaction to silence seven batteries which had been erected, and to see his column retiring to their camps, beyond the reach of our guns."

1 Judge Levi Platt, adjutant 8th regiment. Old stone mill in distance
2 Home of Rev. Frederick Halsey near Halsey's corners
3 Elm stands near site of Prevost's headquarters on the Thomas Allen farm
4 Marker at Halsey's Corners where heavy fighting took place

At three different points attempts were made to cross the Saranac, but after repeated attacks the English were driven back by the militia and volunteers with a considerable loss in killed, wounded and prisoners. A contemporary print stated regarding this affair: "The officers of the army from Spain, who have been engaged in upper Canada, have acknowledged that they never saw such determined charges as was made by the Americans in the late action."

Of the exciting events of that day, the many acts of heroism, offset a bit, we are sorry to say, by some records of cowardice; of the brave acts of Aiken's volunteers, consisting of schoolboys not old enough to be employed at military duty, whose heroic deeds were later, in 1826, recognized by Congress by the official gift to each of them of a rifle properly inscribed "for their gallantry and patriotic services as a volunteer corps, during the siege of Plattsburg;" of the splendid support given the New York militia by the Vermont volunteers; of the high praise accorded the New York militia by Governor Tompkins, in his message of September 26th; of the Governor's strong protest under date of October 3, 1814, to Congressman Fisk, for the omission in the President's message of praise for the New York and Vermont militia for its gallant and effective work at Plattsburg; of the scout work done by Matthew Standish, who first reported the number of the British to General Macomb; of the valorous deeds performed by Captain Gilead Sperry's independent company of minutemen; of Lem Durkee's famous capture of the two, or, as some say, five British soldiers "by surrounding them"; of the good work done by other men, later prominent in the history of Plattsburg and its neighboring counties, but merest mention can be made in the limits of this article.

Baffled by the unexpected resistance he had met from a mere handful of regulars and inexperienced militiamen, disheartened by the defeat of the naval forces, Prevost

and his forces returned to their camp and at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 12th, precipitately retreated, having gone some eight miles before the American generals knew the enemy had fled, leaving their sick, wounded, baggage and valuable stores of every kind behind. Pursued by a detachment of the Americans, over 500 deserters were brought in. The loss of the British, never accurately known, was estimated to be about 2500 in dead, wounded and deserted, while that of the Americans was less than 100. Alison, the European historian, says that the loss of the British was not more than five or six hundred. The same writer states, regarding Prevost's order to retreat, that " such was the indignation that this order excited among the British officers inured in Spain to a long course of victory, that several of them broke their swords, declaring they would never serve again, and the army in mournful submission leisurely wound its way back to the Canadian frontier."

Later, Prevost, for his retreat and inadequate attack, was ordered to a court martial, but died before the trial took place.

Thus ended the land battle of Plattsburg.

Meanwhile, the British naval commander, Captain George Downie, prodded and driven by Prevost, had not been idle in making preparations. At the northerly end of the lake a fleet had been prepared, having two sloops, the *Eagle* and the *Growler*, captured from the Americans in a previous skirmish, as its basis. This fleet, as finally equipped, consisted of the following: the flagship *Confiance*, the brig *Linnet*, the *Chub*, the *Finch* and about twelve gunboats, or galleys.

The naval experts on both sides who have written of this engagement, have rather generally admitted that the British forces were superior to the American in men and armament. Macdonough's official report states that the Americans had eighty-six guns and the British

From an old print

Water battle — Macdonough's victory, 1814

ninety-five, while a contemporary report states the number of Americans in the naval fight to have been 820 and of the British, 1050. Maclay, however, is authority for the statement that the Americans had 1904 pounds of metal as against the British with 1900. Standing in to Plattsburg bay September 3d, Commodore Macdonough anchored his ships just outside the range of the shore batteries and "a little to the south of the outlet" of the river Saranac. The *Eagle* came first with its bow toward Cumberland head on the north, then the rest of the squadron in the following order: the *Saratoga*, the *Ticonderoga* and the *Preble*, the last protected by the shore and Crab island. Between these the galleys were placed to the best supporting advantage. Springs or hawsers were attached to the anchors in such a way that, by hauling or winding them tight, the vessels' heads might be turned around. As an additional naval aid to this contrivance, kedges or light anchors were placed in the proper position, in each bow, "which timely precaution," as Cooper says, "gained the victory."

Lookouts from the British vessels soon discovered the formation of the American fleet. Maclay says that "by this arrangement not only were the enemy prevented from flanking the American lines, but the distance from Cumberland head to Crab island was so short that Captain Downie could not draw out the full length of his line of battle." Leaving Isle La Motte on the morning of the fateful 11th, just after eight o'clock, the British squadron came in sight, the *Finch* leading, followed by the other British boats. At nine o'clock Downie anchored at about three hundred yards distance from the Americans. The *Confiance* opposed the *Saratoga*, the *Finch* the *Ticonderoga*, some of the enemy's galleys the *Preble*, the *Chub* and the *Linnet* the *Eagle*, while the remaining galleys were to give such assistance as possible. As a matter of fact, they were of little help and soon removed out of harm's way.

From Bluff point, looking northeast to scene of Macdonough's victory

All things being ready, Captain Macdonough, being a devout member of the Episcopal church, called together such of his men as were able or cared to do so, to attend the reading of the prayers set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, " to be said before a fight at sea against any enemy."

According to tradition, the 11th broke clear and beautiful, an ideal September morning. A gentle breeze just rippled the surface of the lake. It was Sunday, and a correspondent writes: " I have often heard the old people account for our great victory as owing to the prayers offered on our ship by the commanding officer and from the fact that ' the British commenced the fight on a Sabbath day.' "

My correspondent, relating the story as told her by her grandfather, says: " The British fleet rounded Cumberland head to find our little fleet waiting in line, from where the garrison now stands diagonally out to Crab island. The British fired first, and, when our fleet returned the fire, the balls seemed to just skip on the waters and do the enemy no harm."

The British came on with cheers, with the British ensign proudly floating in the crisp September air, that flag which, on the sea especially, had been lowered so few times before opposing forces. From a broken hen-coop on the American flagship fluttered a patriotic rooster, which, flying on a gun slide, crowed lustily and clapped his wings, amid the cheers of the sailors on the *Saratoga*, who took this as a harbinger of victory.

Rising from his devotions, Commodore Macdonough sighted the first gun on the *Saratoga* and fired, raking the *Confiance* fore and aft, the ball entering an open port, carrying away the wheel and inflicting considerable damage. From then on, the conflict became general, and, close as the vessels were, the struggle developed into one of the most desperate, bloody and fiercely contested of the war. Thrilling incidents were not uncommon. Commodore Macdonough was knocked down once by a splinter and once by the head of one of the sailors. A lieutenant had his feet knocked out from under him by a cannon ball striking a chest of ammunition on which he was standing, and was again knocked down by the head of another sailor. The British commander, Downie, was killed early in the engagement by a gun carriage, which, forced inward by a ball from the opposing ship, struck him so violently as to cause his death. As he started from Isle La Motte, he boasted that within ten minutes after he met the *Saratoga*, he would be on board of her; in not much more than that time he was dead. Fifty-five round shot were placed in the hull of the *Saratoga* by the cannoneers, and one hundred five in the *Confiance*. The rigging of every vessel possessed of masts and sails was shattered to pieces, so that, as one midshipman stated, "one looked like so many bunches of matches and the other like so many bunches of rags."

Benajah Phelps of South Hero, who visited the fleet the day after the battle, stated that the *Confiance* was a

Photo by Mrs Baker

The lake from Cliff Haven

fine ship. " She was made of solid oak timber sawed with a hand saw. . . . The planking was white oak and six inches thick. The small balls did not go through these planks, they were just stuck solid full of balls that looked just like some of the new fashioned houses, plastered on the outside, where they threw gravel into the soft plaster, it seemed as if they couldn't git any more balls in. . . . The rigging was all to pieces, there wasn't any of it left. Our folks used chain shot. . . . They cut the shrouds and everything right off."

Time and opportunity are lacking to describe this naval battle in detail. That has been much better done by experts like J. Fenimore Cooper, Henry B. Dawson, Admiral Mahan, Ex-president Roosevelt and the able historian of the Champlain region, Peter S. Palmer. Suffice it to say, it lasted two hours and twenty minutes, and was, like every Anglo-Saxon contest on the sea, fought to a deadly finish. An English midshipman wrote: " The havoc on both sides is dreadful. . . .

There is one of our marines who was in the Trafalgar action with Lord Nelson, who says it was a flea bite in comparison with this."

Regarding marines, I do not think it is generally known that a detachment of marines accompanied the American squadron under Captain White Youngs, and that on September 13th Captain Macdonough wrote to General Macomb commending Youngs and his men and praising Youngs for volunteering to carry orders to the galleys in a sinking boat, and for supplying the crews with his men, as the sailors were disabled.

At the critical period, when the *Saratoga's* guns on one side had been silenced and the battle was nearly lost to the Americans, Commodore Macdonough executed the difficult naval maneuver upon which the success of the whole battle depended, that of turning the *Saratoga* around by means of the springs and kedges heretofore mentioned. The exploit was successfully performed, the vessel swung around in spite of the opposition of the enemy, and the *Saratoga* presented practically a new ship

Photo by Mrs Baker

Cumberland head

to the British, who attempted to do the same thing, but failed. This maneuver was the beginning of the end. Not long afterward the British struck their colors, and the most decisive of the naval events of the War of 1812–15 was over.

It must have been a wonderful sight, this battle on the lake, and it did not lack for spectators. On North Hero the women and children flocked to the south end of the island to watch the fight, while on Grand isle, all who could find boats crossed the lake to Cumberland head to obtain a closer view, while the rest gathered on the west shore as onlookers of the engagement.

It is to be regretted that neither photography nor moving pictures had been invented in that day and generation. For, in spite of the large number who witnessed the fight, but few statements of eye witnesses have come down to us, and no sketches or pictures of any sort, if we except that purely imaginative one, the magnificent painting which hangs in the study of Smith M. Weed of Plattsburg.

My correspondent, heretofore referred to, says: "But very little seems to have been written down in regard to the events of that day. Perhaps the people living here thought they knew all they wanted to of such a battle and did not need to write about such an event."

It has been stated that nearly every person in the American or British fleet suffered an injury of some sort. After the battle Macdonough stood away to Crab island, where an anchorage was secured, and the dead of both fleets, wrapped only in blankets or not at all, were buried face downward, in a common grave.

It was at this time that Simeon Doty, then a youngster, visited Crab island and saw the dismembered limbs and other *disjecta membra* of the human body, with human entrails, which had been thrown overboard during the engagement, floating into the shore at the landing. Of

the engagement, the following description of Hon. J. C. Hubbell, of Chazy, as printed in the *Plattsburg Republican*, February 1, 1879, may be of interest:

Macdonough's fleet was anchored between Cumberland head and Crab island, a little inside, and the British fleet bore down upon them, under a good northerly breeze. The British guns had much the longest range, but, strangely enough, they came within easy range of our guns, instead of keeping off farther out of reach and using their advantage. This was perhaps owing to a miscalculation on the wind, but anyhow it seemed providential.

Soon the firing commenced. I can not begin to describe that scene. I was near the point of the head, on the west shore, and had a perfect view of the whole battle. The firing was terrific, fairly shaking the ground, and so rapid that it seemed to be one continuous roar, intermingled with spiteful flashing from the mouths of the guns, and dense clouds of smoke soon hung over the two fleets. It appeared to me that our guns were discharged three times to the enemy's once, and a British officer afterwards told me that it took twelve men to manage each of them.

I am not going to tell you the story of the battle; history has done that already, so that everybody is familiar with it. I saw the two midshipmen [Platt and another] go out in their small boat, as it was necessary for somebody to do in order to swing the *Saratoga* around so as to bring her fresh broadside to bear upon her enemy, the *Confiance*. It seemed as if that little boat must be struck, the shot were flying so thick all about it, and I believe it was struck several times, but the *Saratoga* was warped about, and, when that fresh broadside opened, it seemed as if she was all on fire. The battle was soon decided after that, and the British flags came down one after another.

Several gentlemen from Burlington were on the shore where I stood. They had a small canoe, and, after the battle was over, they invited Judge Scott and myself to go in their boat with them aboard the *Saratoga*, and we did so. I had the pleasure of shaking hands with Commodore Macdonough, whom I had met before, and congratulating him on the fact that he had escaped

Photo by Miss Weaver

Looking north, toward Isle La Motte, where the British fleet rested the night before the battle

unharmed. He replied that he was knocked down once by a boom which got cut in two by a shot, part of it falling upon him; and he showed me the place where he stood only a moment before a 20-pound shot swept across the deck over the very spot and buried itself in the mast.

The dead were all packed up in order here, and the decks were cleaned up, but the seams full of blood, and the torn hull, masts and spars told the story of the fearful struggle.

From the *Saratoga* we went aboard the British flagship, the *Confiance*, and here was a horrible sight. The vessel was absolutely torn to pieces; the decks were strewed with mutilated bodies lying in all directions, and everything was covered with blood. It was the most fearful sight I ever beheld or ever expect to, and one I shall never forget. One poor fellow whom I had seen before — a pilot named Brown — lay groaning on the deck, his head swathed up with a bloody shirt. He recognized me, but, when I returned to him a few moments afterwards, he was dead. I went below and saw the body of Commodore Downie lying in his stateroom. He was a large, fair-looking man, and the surgeons could find no mark upon him, but on examination concluded that he must have been killed by a spent shot.

Road at south end of Cumberland head

On boarding the *Confiance* later, a furnace for heating cannon balls, some of which had set the *Saratoga* on fire several times during the battle, was found in full operation. So little had naval science advanced in 1862, according to a very recent magazine article, that such a device was used on the *Merrimac* in its historic duel with the *Monitor.*

With his characteristic modesty, Commodore Macdonough announced the results of the most important of the struggles of the war in a brief note to the secretary of the navy, Hon. W. Jones, under date of September 11, 1814 in these words: "Sir — The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain, in the capture of one frigate, one brig, and two sloops of war of the enemy."

The results of the battle were at once reassuring and heartening to a people which had become thoroughly discouraged by the conduct of the war up to that time. It has been said by someone, that, if any event were ever entitled to be called decisive, this was one of them. Macdonough was promoted to post captain, and public dinners were given to him and Macomb with their

Sword presented to General Macomb by State of New York

official staffs, at Plattsburg on September 23d, and at Burlington on September 26th. Large grants of land were later given to Macdonough by New York State and Vermont, the latter on Cumberland head, making him for that day a comparatively well-to-do man. The State of New York, by official legislative action, and through its governor and commander-in-chief, Daniel D. Tompkins, presented to Captain Macdonough and Generals Macomb, Benjamin Mooers and Samuel Strong of Vermont, handsome swords as trophies and memorials of their valor and services. The city of New York, by its common council, unanimously resolved to present to Macdonough the freedom of the city in a gold box, and Albany did the same; while New York and Delaware requested his portrait for their official picture galleries. Congress also gave Macdonough the usual fine gold medal, the same official reward being given Lieutenants Robert Henley and Stephen Cassin, who were made master commandants by promotion.

Delaware, his native state, gave him a costly sword and silver service; Connecticut, a pair of gold-mounted pistols; and Lansingburg, N. Y., a silver pitcher and

Photo by Miss Weaver

Where the tide of battle ebbed and flowed

goblets. Macomb received honors from Belleville in New Jersey and also a congressional gold medal, while Detroit gave him a silver tankard. In fact nearly all the prominent officers in the battle were recipients of favors of one sort or another.

A hundred fateful years have passed since the Battle of Plattsburg practically decided the fate of a struggling nation, and won for it the respect, if not the friendship, of strong and arrogant European countries.

Since then numberless gallons of water have run from the outlet to the sea, uniting as with a shimmering ribbon of green and sunlit waves, the mighty Dominion of the north and the mightier Republic of the south, in the bonds of peace and amity.

In ruins lie the fortifications of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, defenseless are the lakes and river boundaries, while no heavy-armed war craft plow their waters. The last battle on Champlain is but a dream today, its heroes gone, its warriors all but forgotten. Its story is valuable mostly as a warning to present and future

generations, that war, no matter how necessary to maintain our national honor and integrity, can never, however successful it may be, bring back to life our dead, comfort the widows and orphans, restore the property lost, or add one iota to the moral uplift of the race and its final regeneration.

It is little more than a quarter of a century since, from his deathbed of pain and agony, the great commander of a great war, Ulysses S. Grant, the first of our military apostles of peace, sent forth from the pine-crowned summit of Mount McGregor, rising rugged and sublime from shores washed by the turbid waters of the upper Hudson, this message, which is not unapropos in connection with the period we are treating: "The war has made us a nation of great power and intelligence. We have but little to do to preserve peace, happiness and prosperity at home, and the respect of other nations. Our experience ought to teach us the necessity of the first; our power secures the last."

Siege of Plattsburgh

Tune — *Boyne Water*

Backside Albany stan' Lake Champlain,
  Little pond half full o' water;
Plat-te-burg dar too, close 'pon de main;
  Town small — he grow bigger, do', herearter.
On Lake Champlain Uncle Sam set he boat,
  An' Massa Macdonough he sail 'em;
While Gineral Macomb make Plat-te-burg he home
  Wid de army, whose courage nebber fail 'em.

On 'lebenth day Sep-tem-ber,
  In eighteen hun'red and fourteen,
Gubbernor Probose and the British soj-er
  Come to Plat-te-burg a tea-party courtin';
An' he boat come too, arter Uncle Sam boat.
  Massa 'Donough, he look sharp out de winder;
Den Gineral Macomb (ah! he always a-home)
  Cotch fire too, sirs, like a tinder.

Bang! bang! bang! den de cannons 'gin to roar,
  In Plat-te-burg and all 'bout dat quarter;
Gubbernor Probose try he han' 'pon de shore,
  While he boat take he luck 'pon de water;
But Massa Macdonough knock he boat in he head,
  Break he heart, break he shin, 'tove he caff in,
An' Gineral Macomb start ole Probose home —
  To't me soul den I muss die a laffin'.

Probose scare so he lef' all behine,
  Powder, ball, cannon, tea-pot, an' kittle;
Some say he cotch a cole — trouble in he mine
  'Cause he eat so much raw an' cole vittle.
Uncle Sam berry sorry, to be sure, for he pain
  Wish he nuss herself up well an' hearty,
For Gineral Macomb and Massa 'Donough home
  When he notion for anudder tea-party.

The victories of Macdonough and Macomb were the subject of one of the most popular songs written and sung during the war. It was written by Micajah Hawkins for the proprietor of a theater in Albany, and sung by him in the character of a negro sailor. Governor Tompkins was present when it was first sung. Hawkins gained great applause and a prize by his performance. He was afterward a grocer in Catharine street, New York.

Lossing's *Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812.*

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Walworth homestead, Broad street

A rocket battery was stationed on site in rear of this house, and in its yard Aiken's company was formed by academy boys

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Home of Dr Benjamin J. Mooers, a surgeon in the battle

Biographical Sketches

SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Sir George Prevost, a son of Major General Augustine Prevost, who saw service in the French war and the Revolution, was born in New York City May 19, 1767. Entering the army, he became a captain in 1783, and in 1790 was made major in the 60th (Royal American) foot and went with his regiment to the West Indies, where he was wounded twice in an engagement in St Vincent. In 1798 he rose to the rank of brigadier general, being named the same year military governor of St Lucia. Three years later the office of civil governor was conferred on him in answer to a petition of the people of that island; and the year following he was appointed captain general and governor-in-chief of Dominica. He participated in campaigns in St Lucia and Dominica, returning to England in 1805, when he was given command of the Portsmouth district and was honored with a baronetcy. He took part in the capture of Martinique and attained the rank of lieutenant general. Manifest fitness for civil office led to the selection of Prevost in 1808 for lieutenant governor and commander-in-chief of Nova Scotia, and three years afterward to his appointment as governor general of British North America.

His course during the war with the United States was judicious in the main, since it was generally confined to defensive measures and to exertions for maintaining colonial loyalty to the British connection. The offensive campaigning in which he participated had results less happy. The attack on Sacketts Harbor in May 1813 yielded hardly more satisfaction than the operations which collapsed at Plattsburg. At Sacketts Harbor a strong body of British regulars, sustained by volunteers and Indians, and a respectable squadron, were beaten

by a small garrison of regular troops, having the brief and wavering support of militia. After the repulse which he suffered on the Saranac, Prevost was evidently fearful that he would meet a fate like that of Burgoyne. Tidings of militia reinforcements hastening to the assistance of Macomb came to his ears, and these reports, it is said, were much exaggerated by a Yankee device, with the effect of exciting his worst apprehensions and causing his hurried retreat. The censures which fell heavy on Prevost after this disaster pursued him to the end of his career. In the Canadian assembly, on the conclusion of peace, a bill to present him with a service of plate " in testimony of the country's sense of his distinguished talents, wisdom and ability " was approved, but the council withheld assent. He was called to England to answer charges springing out of the Plattsburg expedition; and died a week before the meeting of a court martial which was to try him, a victim to anxiety over the position in which he was placed.

GEORGE DOWNIE

George Downie was born in the county of Ross, Ireland, and was the son of a clergyman. Entering the British navy as a midshipman, he served in the action off Camperdown. For several years he saw service in the West Indies, where he was promoted to a lieutenancy; and in 1804, while lieutenant of the frigate *Sea-horse*, in the Mediterranean, he took charge of a six-oared cutter and performed the exploit of capturing a Spanish convoy, laden with stores, which had the protection of a battery, two armed schooners and other boats. The following year the *Sea-horse* vanquished a squadron of Turkish ships, and Downie enjoyed the honor of taking a captured frigate to Malta. Advancement to the rank of master and commander immediately followed his service in this battle. Appointed to the command of a sloop of war,

BACK SIDE ALBANY.

And he boat come ino arter Uncle Sam boat.

AND JACK OF GUINEA.

Battle of Plat-te-bug.

Back side Albany was' Lake Champlain,
One little pond, half full a' water;
Plat-te-bug dare too, close pon de main—
Town small—he grow bigger do bezeaster.
On Lake Champlain Uncle Sam set he boat;
And Massa M'Donough he sail 'em,
While Gen'ral M'Comb make Plat-te-bug he home,
Wid de army, who courage nebber fail 'em.

On labenth day of Sep-pe-tem-ber,
In eighteen hundred an fourteen,
Gubbenar Prebone, an he British eager,
Come to Plat-te-bug a tea party mornin;
An he boat come too arter Uncle Sam boat,
Massa Donnough do look sharp out da winder,
Den General M'Comb (ah! he always a home,)
Catch fire too, jus like tinder.

Bang—Bang—Bang-den de cannons 'gin t' roar
In Plat-te-bug, an all about dat quarter;
Gubbenar Prebone try he hand 'pon de shore,
While he boat he take he back 'pon de water;
But Massa M'Donnough knock he boat in he head,
Broke he mast, broke he shin, 'tove in he cuffin,
An General M'Comb start ole Prebone home,
Tot me soul den I must die a laffin.

Ole Prebone scare so, he lef all behine,
Powder, ball, cannon, tea-pot an kettle—
Some say he catch a cole, trouble in he mine,
'Cause he eat so much raw an ole cuttle.
Uncle Sam berry sorry to be sure, for he pain;
Wish he mass himself up well and hearty—
And have Gen. M'Comb an Massa Donnough home
When he nation for sudder tea party.

Jack of Guinea.

Great way off at sea, when at home I've been me,
Buckra man fetch me from the coast of Guinea;
Christian massa pray, he call'd me heathen doggy,
Den I run away for very much he floggy.
Ri tol lol, &c.

White man bring me here, and good christian make me,
Lady fair, O dear! for a footman take me,
Stand behind her chair she faro play for guinea;
Always she play fair, yet she always winner.
Ri tol lol, &c.

Lady run away, lawyer man now take me,
Latin word he say, and great cupie he make me;
Poor man dare I saw go to law so funny,
He get all the law, but massa all the money.
Ri tol lol, &c.

Arter man so guy for a savvy hire me,
Tweedy he play—play-house never tire me;
Massa often die, don good wine he quaffee,
All the people cry, I and massa laugh so.
Ri tol lol, &c.

After dat I go with a doctor he'se,
Hold him head out so, dere de fee dey gives,
Day he feel enough, massa make great fusses,
He give de patient stuff, it make the poor soul worse.
Ri tol lol, &c.

Negro girl I see, love her sweet as honey,
Soon she marry me, she and I get money;
Happy on we on, she he so bewitcher,
While I jump Jim Crow, she cus "Clar de kitchen."
Ri tol lol, &c.

Sold wholesale and retail by Hoyt & Stow, No. 2 Mercantile wharf, and head of City wharf, North Side.

Rare broadside from collection in State Library. **See p. 39**

A popular ballad of 1814

he exerted himself with such effect in opposing privateers, in the war with the United States, that he attained a post captaincy. In April of 1814 Downie joined the fleet on Lake Ontario, under Sir James Yeo, by whom he was put in command of the Champlain flotilla. Downie's qualities as an officer were united with engaging personal traits, the appreciation of which found early expression in the tributes to his fame. Many years after his death a marble slab was laid over his grave in the Plattsburg burying ground, bearing these words: " Sacred to the memory of George Downie, Esq., a post captain in the Royal British Navy, who gloriously fell on board his B. M. S. the ' Confiance ' while leading the vessels under his command to the attack of the American flotilla at anchor in Cumberland bay, off Plattsburg, on the 11th of September 1814. To mark the spot where the remains of a gallant officer and sincere friend were honorably interred, this stone has been erected by his affectionate sister-in-law, Mary Downie, 1851."

THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Thomas Macdonough, born December 23, 1783, was a native of New Castle county, Delaware, the son of Thomas Macdonough, a physician, who served in the War of the Revolution with regimental command and held for many years the office of associate judge in the court of common pleas. The son enlisted as a midshipman in the naval service, and was with Commodore Decatur in the war with Tripoli, obtaining promotion for distinguished conduct in the destruction of the *Philadelphia.* At Gibraltar, while in temporary command of the *Siren,* he showed the spirit which animated him by rescuing an impressed sailor from a boat, under the guns of the British vessel which had ordered the seizure and to which the prisoner was being conveyed. In 1813 Macdonough was made master commandant, and he was sent to Lake Champlain to command the flotilla

with which it was designed to defend the mastery of the lake. He spent the winter at Vergennes, employed in strengthening his fleet, which lay in Otter creek. In the following May an attack was made by the enemy on the battery erected at the mouth of the creek for the protection of his vessels, but was repelled by Macdonough. The close of the war found him in impaired health. He continued in the naval service, however, and died at sea, November 16, 1825. In this officer native intrepidity was mingled with the higher form of courage which springs from moral motives and a religious sense of duty.

JOHN ELLIS WOOL

John Ellis Wool was born February 20, 1784 at Newburgh, N. Y., attended school at Troy, engaged in business, studied law and in 1812 received a commission as captain in the 13th United States infantry. For his conduct at Queenston he was promoted to the rank of major in the 29th regiment; and his behavior at Plattsburg brought a lieutenant colonelcy. Transferred to the 6th regiment after the close of the war, he became inspector general with colonel's rank. In 1836 he successfully performed the work of removing the Cherokee Indians to the country beyond the Mississippi. Five years later he was appointed a brigadier general. In the Mexican War he won a high reputation, being brevetted major general for gallant and meritorious conduct at Buena Vista and receiving a sword of honor by resolution of Congress. Swords were also presented by the State of New York and citizens of Troy. At the outbreak of the Civil War, General Wool was at the head of the Department of the East, saving Fortress Monroe by prompt reinforcement and afterward commanding that post. He retired from active service August 1, 1863. His death occurred in Troy November 10, 1869. A monument in that city attests public appreciation of his services.

The DeLord house, Cumberland avenue

1 Old doorway; 2 stairway in house; 3 garden laid out by Major De Russey in 1812. The silver was buried in rear garden.

SAMUEL STRONG

Samuel Strong was born at Salisbury, Conn., and was the second son of John Strong, who removed from Connecticut to Addison, Vt. The son left Addison with his family in the winter of 1793–94 and settled at Vergennes, where he engaged in farming and lumbering, was interested in manufactures and contributed in many ways to the development of that region. For some years he was president of the Vergennes bank. He held the offices of alderman, representative, assistant judge of the county court and mayor, and from 1804 to 1810 was major general of the State militia. When Prevost's approach was announced, the political scruples of the governor of Vermont, Martin Chittenden, did not allow him to order the militia out of the state; consequently he called for volunteers to aid in checking the invasion. The response was quick and enthusiastic. A brigade was raised, of which General Strong received the command. The day before the action there were about 1200 men in his force, but on the 11th of September the number had been swollen to 2500 by the constant arrival of fighting men. The exposures of the campaign made the Vermont general an invalid for the remainder of his days. His property in land was extensive, and, at his death in 1833, he left a large estate to his son, General Samuel P. Strong.

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

A decoration of honor

Cannon ball lodged in south wall of General Mooers' house. This wall was originally an exterior one, through which the ball crashed after entering the open door.

ALEXANDER MACOMB

Alexander Macomb was born in Detroit April 3, 1782, and was educated in New Jersey. He was a cornet of light dragoons in the United States army in 1799, a second lieutenant of infantry in 1801, a lieutenant of engineers the following year, and, rising through successive grades, was transferred to a colonelcy in the artillery July 6, 1812, serving in this rank at Niagara and Fort George. In January of 1814 he was promoted brigadier general; and September 11th of that year earned a brevet major generalship for distinguished and gallant conduct at Plattsburg, receiving as well the thanks of Congress and a gold medal. Subsequently a colonel of engineers, then a major general, Macomb was made commander-in-chief of the army in 1828, a position which he held till his death in 1841. He was interred in the Congressional burying ground at Washington. General Macomb was the author of treatises on courts martial and supervised a work on tactics and regulations for the militia.

Tankard presented to General Macomb by city of Detroit

BENJAMIN MOOERS

Benjamin Mooers was born April 1, 1758, at Haverhill, Mass. In the War of the Revolution he saw service

Site of Fort Izard, Cumberland head, showing depth of intrenchments

at Ticonderoga, and was a lieutenant and adjutant in Colonel Moses Hazen's Canadian regiment. Removing to Plattsburg, N. Y., after the war, he became a prominent citizen of Clinton county, which he served as sheriff and treasurer. He also filled the following posts: assemblyman, State senator, member of council of appointment and presidential elector. In the militia he rose through long service to the dignity of major general; and the responsibilities of this office were his when Prevost invaded the State. General Mooers's residence was on Cumberland head, where he died in February 1838.

ROBERT HENLEY

Robert Henley, who commanded the *Eagle* in the battle of Plattsburg, was born January 5, 1783 in Williamsburg, Va. He attended William and Mary College. Entering the navy as a midshipman, he saw service with Commodore Truxton in the *Constellation*, and took part in the engagement with the French frigate *La Vengeance*. For his behavior in Macdonough's victory he received the thanks of Congress and a gold medal. In 1825 he was made a captain. Henley died on Sullivan's island, S. C., October 7, 1828.

DANIEL APPLING

Daniel Appling was born in 1787 in Columbia county, Georgia. In 1808 he was a second lieutenant of rifles, and in 1814 a major. His behavior in the brilliant affair of Sandy Creek procured promotion; and this was followed by advancement to a colonel's rank for distinguished service at Plattsburg. He died March 5, 1817.

STEPHEN CASSIN

Stephen Cassin, son of John Cassin, an American naval officer, was born in Philadelphia February 16, 1783. He entered the navy as a midshipman and was promoted lieutenant, having distinguished himself in the war with Tripoli. At Plattsburg he commanded the *Ticonderoga*, winning from Congress a vote of thanks and a gold medal. His reputation was increased by successful undertakings against West India pirates. In 1825 a captain's commission was conferred on him. He died in Georgetown, D. C., August 29, 1857.

Photo by Miss Weaver

Cumberland head, near Plattsburg bay

Guy Dunham house, northeast corner Court and Oak streets, now the Dodds house

Hiram Walworth house, Broad street

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Peter Sailly house, with original brass knocker

Richard S. Mooers house, Cumberland head. Quartermaster 8th regiment

Old Plattsburg doorways

The Battle of Plattsburgh Bay

[September 11, 1814]

Plattsburgh bay! Plattsburgh bay!
Blue and gold in the dawning ray,
Crimson under the high noonday
With the reek of the fray!

It was Thomas Macdonough, as gallant a sailor
As ever went scurrying over the main;
And he cried from his deck, *If they think I'm a quailer,*
And deem they can capture this Lake of Champlain,
We'll show them they're not fighting France, sir, nor Spain!

So from Cumberland head to the little Crab island
He scattered his squadron in trim battle-line;
And when he saw Downie come rounding the highland,
He knelt him, beseeching for guidance divine,
Imploring that Heaven would crown his design.

Then thundered the Eagle her lusty defiance;
The stout Saratoga aroused with a roar;
Soon gunboat and galley in hearty alliance
Their resonant volley of compliments pour;
And ever Macdonough's the man to the fore!

And lo, when the fight toward its fiercest was swirling,
A gamecock released by a splintering ball,
Flew high in the ratlines, the smoke round him curling,
And over the din gave his trumpeting call,
An omen of ultimate triumph to all!

Then a valianter light touched the powder-grimed faces;
Then faster the shot seemed to plunge from the gun;
And we shattered their yards and we sundered their braces,
And the fume of our cannon — it shrouded the sun;
Cried Macdonough — *Once more, and the battle is won!*

Now, the flag of the haughty Confiance is trailing;
The Linnet in woe staggers in toward the shore;
The Finch is a wreck from her keel to her railing;
The galleys flee fast to the strain of the oar;
Macdonough! 'tis he is the man to the fore!

Oh, our main decks were grim and our gun decks were gory,
And many a brave brow was pallid with pain;

And while some won to death, yet we all won to glory
Who fought with Macdonough that day on Champlain,
And humbled her pride who is queen of the main!

Clinton Scollard,
In Ballads of Valor and Victory, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904.

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

In the DeLord house
Old furniture in use at time of battle

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Contemporary silver and furniture
In the Madam DeLord house, Cumberland avenue. The silver set buried in garden until after battle. The mahogany sideboard mutilated by British and door replaced with one of cherry

McDonough's Orders.

On the morning of the 11th Sept. 1814 at [illegible] past 8 A.M. a signal salute was heard by commodore McDonough the line which lay at Plattsburgh bay, commanding the approach of capt. Downie's fleet. At [illegible] minutes before nine the action commenced [illegible] of the Confiance of 39 guns-29 long 24 pounders and 10 32 lb. carronades Brig Linnet of 16 long 12 pounders-Sloop Chub and the Finch of 12 guns each besides 14 row galleys.—

The American fleet was composed of the Saratoga—brig Eagle, schooner Ticonderoga, sloop Preble 16 row galleys.—The action commenced at fifteen minutes before nine or rather by land ceased 20 minutes past 11 A.M.—one hour and 20 minutes close action. The brig Eagle sustained the fire of the Confiance, until she [illegible] came within reach of the Saratoga carronades, she then engaged the enemy's brig the Linnet. One hour after the action the ship Confiance struck her flag and therefore the Saratoga turned her shot against the Linnet, just at the establishment of [illegible] ascending it was soon silenced. The cables of the commodores ship being shot away she were moved on her spring, her larboard side engaged the enemy as the Starboard side were useless all [illegible] for service from the heavy fire of the enemy. Upon the loss of masts, the guns could not be sufficiently [illegible] Lieut. Gamble placed his musket to [illegible], who himself took command of a brig 24 which was soon afterwards dismantled—he afterwards took only four of his guns turned to a 32 pound carronade, which besides attending to the duties of the commodore he attended to during the action.

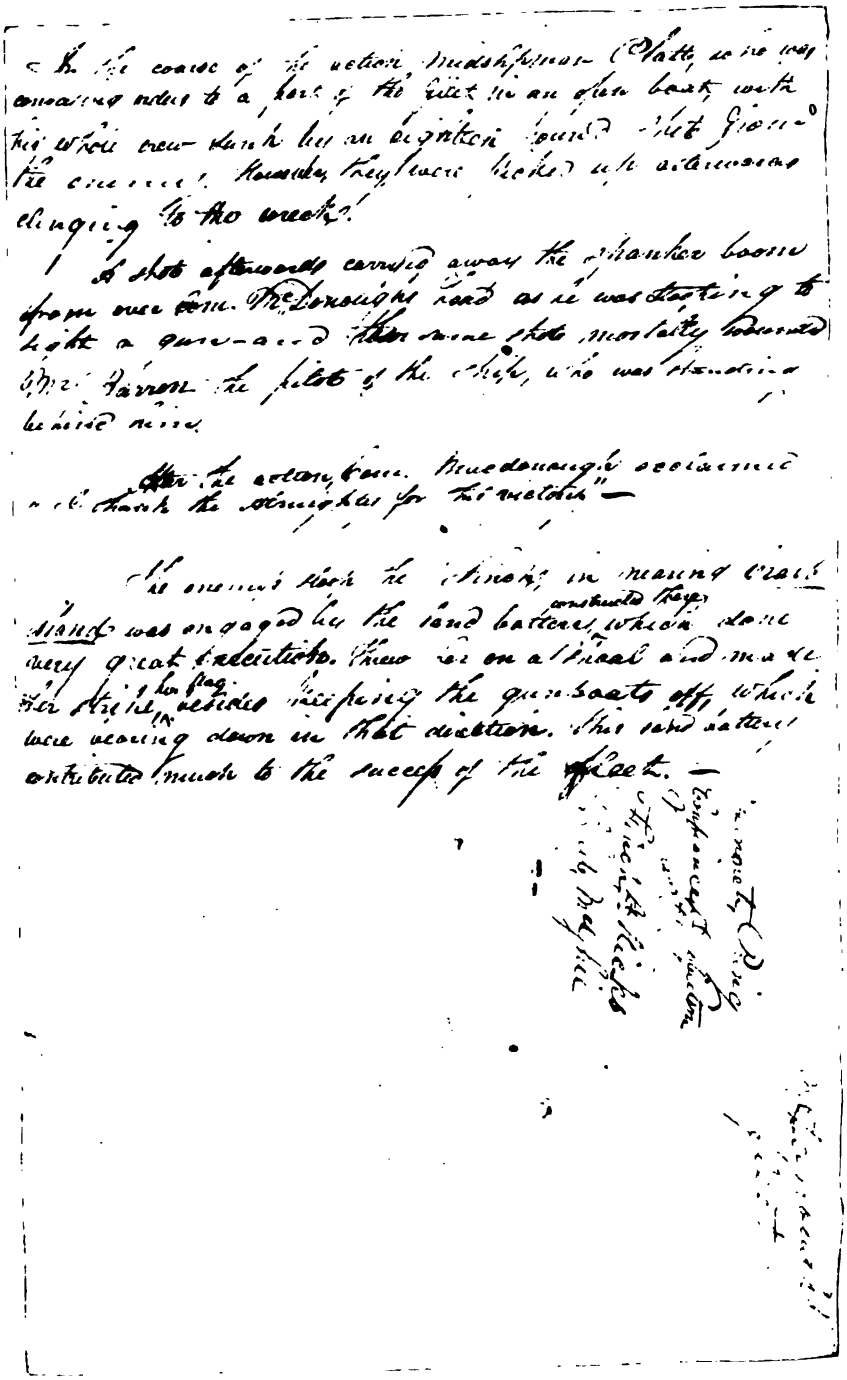
After the enemy's ship struck the second time Lieut. Yarnall was ordered on board [illegible] other of the enemy's vessels struck their colours and brought her commander and officers to the commodore.

10

From manuscript collection in State Library

Contemporary story of battle

See page 56 for transcript



From manuscript collection in State Library

Contemporary story of battle

See page 56 for transcript

McDONOUGH'S VICTORY

On the morning of the 11. Sep[t] 1814 at fifteen m past 8 A. M. a royal salute was heard by commodore M[c] Donough's line which lay moored in Plattsburgh bay, announcing the approch of Capt. Downie's fleet. [*It past Cumberland head at half past eight and at fifteen minutes before nine the action commenced.*][1] The British fleet consisted of the ship *Confiance*, of 39 guns — 29 long 24 pounders and 10 32 p. Carronades Brig *Linnet* — of 16 long 12 pounders — sloops Chub and the Finch of 12 guns each besides 14 row gallies.—

The American fleet was composed of the Ship Saratoga — brig Eagle, schooner Ticonderoga, and sloop Preble, & 10 row gallies.— The action commenced at fifteen minutes before nine o'clock and ceased 20 minutes past 11 A. M.— one hour and 20 minutes close action. The brig Eagle sustained the fire of the Confiance until that ship came within shot of the Saratoga's carronades, she then engaged the enemy's brig the Linnet. One hour after the action the ship Confiance struck her flag, and therefore the Saratoga turned her shot against the Linnet, but to the astonishment of Com. M[c]-Donough it was again hoisted. The cables of the commodore's ship being then cut she wore round on her spring, her larbord side engaging the enemy — as the guns of the starbord side were nearly all rendered unfit for service from the heavy fire of the enemy. Even then by the loss of men, the guns could not be sufficiently manned until Cap[t] Youngs placed his marines to them, who himself took command of a long 24 which was soon afterwards dismounted — he afterwards, with only four of his men, turned to a 32 pound carronade, which besides attending to the orders of the commodore, he attended to during the action.

After the enemy's ship struck the second time, Captain Youngs was ordered on board; (no other of the enemy ceased firing) and brought her commanding officer to the commodore.

In the coarse of the action Midshipman Platt, who was conveying orders to a part of the fleet in an open boat, with his whole crew sunk, by an eighteen pound shot from the enemy. However, they were picked up afterwards clinging to the wreck.

A shot afterwards carryed away the spanker boom from over Com. M[c] Donough's head as he was stooping to sight a gun — and the same shot mortally wounded M[r] Barron, the pilot of the ship, who was standing behind him.

After the action, Com. Macdonough exclaimed "I thank the Almighty for this victory."—

The enemy's sloop the Finch, in nearing *Crabb Island*, was engaged by the land battery, constructed there, which done very great execution. Threw her on a shoal and made her strike her flag, besides keeping the gunboats off, which were bearing down in that direction. This land battery contributed much to the success of the fleet.—

[1] Words in italics and incloced in brackcts are erased in original manuscript.

Political Conditions in America and Europe

BY RICHARD E. DAY

THE view that America engaged in " the second war for independence " in order to vindicate the policy of international neutrality commended in the farewell address of Washington wants completeness; but the influence of Washington's warning can be traced in the events preceding that war. A war for independence it was, but the American idea of independence included the liberty of the young republic to pursue its way outside the circle of European political interests. It was a war for commercial freedom, but the assaults on American trade and navigation which engendered it were provoked in part by the determination of this country " to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."

Washington's administration gave an impulse to the doctrine that a nation has equal obligations toward states with which it is at peace and the right to work out its destiny, unmolested by nations with which it has sought no quarrel. The rights of citizens of neutral powers were presented in the state communications which attended the contest of the government with Genet and its resistance to the assumptions and encroachments of England. The value of this early statement in the development of principles of neutrality is recognized by writers on the law of nations. The Jay treaty, belonging to the same period, was intended to arrest British trespasses on the rights of a neutral state, as well as to settle outstanding difficulties.

During the administration of President Adams, the policy of Washington was confirmed. The Jay treaty had keenly offended the French people. The Directory, charging that its provisions violated the Franco-American treaty of 1778, entered on a course of insult and aggression. This state of affairs was the heritage of John

Adams. The French government could not have selected a less suitable person at whom to direct its demands for an apology, a loan and a gift of money. The nation of which he was the executive head was not more submissive. Congress and the navy, each in its sphere, effectively asserted the purpose of the United States to remain detached from the colossal strife into which Europe was precipitated by the French Revolution.

The course of Thomas Jefferson toward the policy of noninterference illustrates the potency of the precedent, while it furnishes a study in the educating influence of responsibility. In 1789 he returned from Europe, saturated with Gallic ideas; and, when France was launched on its career of conflict, he was persuaded that Americans were obliged in honor and interest to make common cause with their former ally. Early in his first term as President, so far freed from illusions regarding the nature of the objects which France had in view, he professed a disposition to accept an offensive alliance with England, and employed this threat to weaken the clutch of the First Consul on Louisiana. Jefferson was so well satisfied that the exclusion of France from Louisiana was an end of vital importance to the West and the South that he was willing, for its sake, to sacrifice the shreds of his earlier sympathies. But the command of the Mississippi, with the imperial territory of which it is the artery, passed to the United States without recourse to arms; and the nation reverted to the policy of Washington.

In 1803, after a brief pause in hostilities, England and France drew the sword again. Profiting by the injury to their trade and merchant marine, American commerce sprang to the fore. The awakened jealousy of those nations, in union with the passionate conviction of Englishmen and Frenchmen that all mankind was bound to participate in their tremendous strife, led to flagrant interference with American ships, and, on England's

part, to seizures of sailors. England contended that desertions from her navy were encouraged by Americans, and that many of her subjects were serving on ships of this country. American theories of naturalization and asylum, then new to the mind of Europe, were to wait a long time for general acknowledgment. The offenses in question were perhaps resented as much as those haughty decrees and orders, issued by the combatants, by which each declared the other's ports to be in a state of blockade and interdicted trade with its enemy.

Jefferson had opportunity to terminate the encroachments of Great Britain and obtain an indirect protection of our vessels by entering into engagements with that power which the French would have regarded as tantamount to an alliance. He declined those engagements. As his administration began with measures to reduce the navy, he was in no position to guard our imperiled commerce with American guns. But he was not without resources. If foreign trade should be suppressed by act of Congress, no exercise of force or diplomacy in its behalf would be needful; that is the policy which he espoused. By means of the embargo, American ships were restrained from leaving port, and a like restriction was laid on goods. This form of retaliation might have been construed as a hostile proceeding by other countries affected, as it involved the withdrawal of privilege and intercourse long enjoyed. Unfriendly it seemed to New England, whose export and carrying business was sacrificed. It contained the seeds of sectional disaffection, which were to produce a baleful harvest a few years later. But it was an expedient for preserving American neutrality, and for that reason might claim some support from Washington's policy. Jefferson's successor had a more difficult task. Negative war had failed; something aggressive must be tried. Under Madison the country moved unsteadily toward an appeal to arms. Madison

Photo by Mrs Baker

General Woolsey homestead, Cumberland head

was a constructive thinker, whose share in the federal constitution insures him a perpetuity of fame, but a master of other powers was required if war was to be prevented or waged to a compensating close. He was altogether ill-suited to match the craft and dissimulation of Bonaparte, whose purpose was to irritate America by constant offenses and produce the impression that his real inclination was to conciliate her regard.

It may be asked why the United States fought England rather than France, or why we engaged formally in hostilities, when the course pursued so effectively in 1798 was open, namely, to create a capable navy, and employ it in repelling attacks on our merchantmen, whenever and by whomever made. Did the old enmity against the mother country, combined with sympathy with the old ally, conceal from the majority of Americans the issues of the European contest? Did they conceive that Napoleon Bonaparte was the champion or the child of their ideas, or that his system of rule from 1804 to 1814 was anything but a despotism propped with bayonets? Many Americans appreciated the character

of the exertions which England was putting forth to "shake the spoiler down." But a statesman of Washington's stature was needed to stay the drift of the young nation in that crisis; and no such interposition was afforded. The final impulse to war was given by the partisan and sectional passions against which Washington had issued an impressive warning.

So far as war was undertaken in defense of the carrying trade, it was fought for the sake of the New England states, the most manifest sufferers from foreign vexation and the nonintercourse acts of Congress. But partisan advantage entered so visibly into the question of peace or war that the chief sentiment which sustained the administration was furnished outside of New England, the stronghold of Federalism. The Democratic-Republican party, while exercising the powers of government, had done little to provide an army and had shown a fanatical opposition to warships. Furthermore, in its

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Thorn's tavern at Thorn's Corners

Much desultory fighting took place in this vicinity

ardor for war, its opponents detected the old Jeffersonian leaven of favor toward the French. In the measure in which the Republicans became a war party the Federalists became a peace party. The assertion of state rights, made by Kentucky and Virginia in 1798, was assumed by Massachusetts and the neighboring states in 1812. States which were immediately exposed to invasion from Canada took the position that the principal business of their militia was to protect their own borders, one consequence of which was that this business was left to them for the most part, another consequence being that offensive enterprises were weakened, and measures to repel foreign invasion embarrassed. In 1814 a militia draft bill in Congress, providing 80,000 troops for the defense of the United States, met energetic opposition. Even a representative from New York declared that " he would not give any supplies to the government for the conquest of Canada; but, if our army was withdrawn from that country, and the project of conquest relinquished, he would go as far as any gentleman to raise men and money for defense." The same representative expressed the hope that the people would resist conscription. So far were we then from being a nation!

In the same spirit, private citizens in the centers of capital refused to lend money to the almost bankrupt government; subscriptions to its loans were discouraged and denounced; and attacks were made on the credit of banks which responded to national appeals for support.

The division of sentiment was widened by the increasing antipathy of northern men to slavery. The attitude of southern men to that institution was changing. It had been largely one of deprecation and apology. It was being transformed to one of ardent advocacy. In 1812 the antagonism was sufficiently acute to impress itself on national issues, even such as involved the fame and integrity of the Union. The communities in which

slavery was becoming extinct viewed with apprehension every movement which tended to enhance the power and prestige of the South, and indulged a feeling that a pronounced victory for America would be essentially a slaveholders' triumph. Antislavery men were suspicious that influences at Washington were really unfavorable to the conquest of Canada, since its annexation would add a large free soil territory to the Republic and destroy the predominance of the slave states. They pointed to the employment of indifferent officers at the head of the army as evidence of a purpose to wage a war of mere annoyance against the Canadians.

The disaffection of New England operated strongly to induce peace when the commissioners met at Ghent in August of 1814. The threat of secession which the slave interests held over free soil men for forty years before giving it effect, was used in the northeastern division of this country to compel a termination of the war. The blockade maintained by British ships against Atlantic ports had been a source of intense suffering to the mercantile classes. Expression was finally given to the spirit of opposition in the Hartford convention, called by the Massachusetts Legislature This assembly was destined to an unhappy immortality. Robert Y. Hayne, of South Carolina, in his debate with Daniel Webster, stigmatized its objects in the following description: " to keep back the men and money of New England from the service of the Union, and to effect radical changes in the government — changes that can never be effected without a dissolution of the Union." From the accusations and admissions which attended that convention, it has been gathered that the Federalist leaders were prepared, if they judged it necessary, to propose that the federal fabric be dissolved and a northern confederacy erected. The immediate effect of their action was favorable to the sheathing of the sword.

The defeat of a powerful invading armament at Plattsburg and the repulse of the expedition against Baltimore still further disposed the minds of Americans to consider peace. These events had given luster to their arms, and were accepted as an offset to campaigns which had proved fruitless, though eminently marked by successes in single actions. At this time most of the domain overrun by the enemy had been recovered, the important exception being territory between the Penobscot and the St Croix, over which a British governor had been appointed. If the army, on which Madison had relied for the reduction of Canada, had not been able to keep American soil everywhere inviolate, the navy, from which he expected little, had achieved a nearly unbroken succession of victories on the element which Britain had pronounced her own.

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Cellar of Guy Dunham house

Wounded in battle taken in this door. Original wide clap boards still in place

The condition of Europe had a pacific influence. The abdication of Napoleon and his retirement to Elba brought relief to the powers after twenty years of agonized conflict. The exhausting drain on their energies has not been repaired to this day, but is revealed to the

student of social welfare in public debt, depressing poverty and lowered standards of physique. England, the center of that long resistance to Napoleon — a personality grown too mighty for the good of humanity — needed repose. Content with preserving her colonial empire against our armies, convinced by those exhibitions of courage and endurance of which the Battle of Plattsburg was a type that this country was practically unconquerable, it was important to her as well as to America to turn again to the neglected arts of peace. The right of impressment, inherent in the definition of a subject as she framed it, could not then be abandoned; but, with the cessation of the European conflict, the necessity for its exercise ceased. The orders in council, by which American commerce was so grievously harassed, had been repealed in 1812. Great Britain's commissioners at Ghent put forward some exorbitant requirements, providing for a surrender of American territory, British

Photo by Mrs. Trumbull

Guy Dunham house, now Dodds' house, northeast corner of Oak and Court streets

control of frontier waters and the concession to the Indian tribes of inalienable rights in the soil which they occupied; but these pretensions were relinquished. Happily for the United States, the commission which represented it in the negotiations comprised several men of superior talent and sagacity.

For a time a continuance of the war looked probable, by reason of a diplomatic deadlock. Englishmen believed that an eagerness to aid Napoleon at an important juncture had caused the declaration of war by the United States; and the time seemed fitting to punish American presumption, as well as to restore the prestige which Macdonough's victory had impaired. Some members of the ministry at London advised the sending of Wellington, with his newly disengaged veterans, across the ocean. Why was that step not taken? And why was Wellington's counsel adverse to the proposal? An influential reason may be found in the aspect of European affairs at the close of 1814. At Paris the restored dynasty had begun its work of reestablishing much that was hateful to a generation of Frenchmen which it did not understand. At Vienna the master minds of reaction were employed in securing the old order, upbuilding the monarchies which the armies of France had prostrated and devising means for her humiliation. On an island in the Mediterranean, the exiled emperor was watching the effect on the French people of that course of retrogression and revenge, pursued in enmity to the revolution as well as to the empire. What was more than a possibility then, his return from Elba and resumption of his old place, was to be a fact in three months. Wise Englishmen reckoned with this probability and the demands which it would lay on the military strength of England. There was other business ahead for Wellington than to unsheathe his sword against Americans.

That record which "never shall be shamed" was not to be heightened or dimmed in the New World, but to be clothed with new light at Waterloo.

The freedom of the United States to refuse alliances which are not recommended by its interests was established by the War of 1812. The principles of the first national administration touching the rights of neutrals were upheld at immense cost, thus attaining to a consideration by virtue of which they control the practice of civilized communities in an ever ascending degree. Finally, in vindicating those principles, the young republic achieved its independence, never thoroughly conceded before by the nation from which it sprang or the power with which it was once allied in arms.

Photo by Miss Weaver

Scene of Macdonough's victory in Plattsburg bay. View from Cumberland head

On Board the "Saratoga"

Tuesday 13th Sept. 1814

DEAR DAD — I oft have heard you tell
How many fought, how many fell,
And how the foe you drubbed well,
On the plains of Saratoga.

It's now my turn with pride to boast,
We conquered Britain's warlike host;
On Champlain's lake we rule the roast,
On board the Saratoga.

At nine A. M. on Sunday morn
The mighty foe approached in form,
And viewed us with contempt and scorn
On board the Saratoga.

How frequently I've heard you say,
That those who fight ought oft to pray:
Our Commodore did both that day
On board the Saratoga.

Then with the Christian's hope we fought
Nor ought of fear or danger thought,
But death or victory we sought
On board the Saratoga.

The battle rag'd for near three hours,
When aided by the Almighty powers
We claim'd the enemy as ours
On board the Saratoga.

O had you seen the sore dismay
Of poor Sir George, who ran away,
And bitterly he curs'd the day
He saw the Saratoga.

Then brave Macomb hung on his rear.
For our firesides we've naught to fear
Whilst heroes to their country dear
Command our forts, our vessels steer;
Success will still crown their career,
And Sailor's Rights, and Free Trade's cheer,
Shall be extended far and near,
Whilst patriots yet unborn shall hear
The fame of the Saratoga.

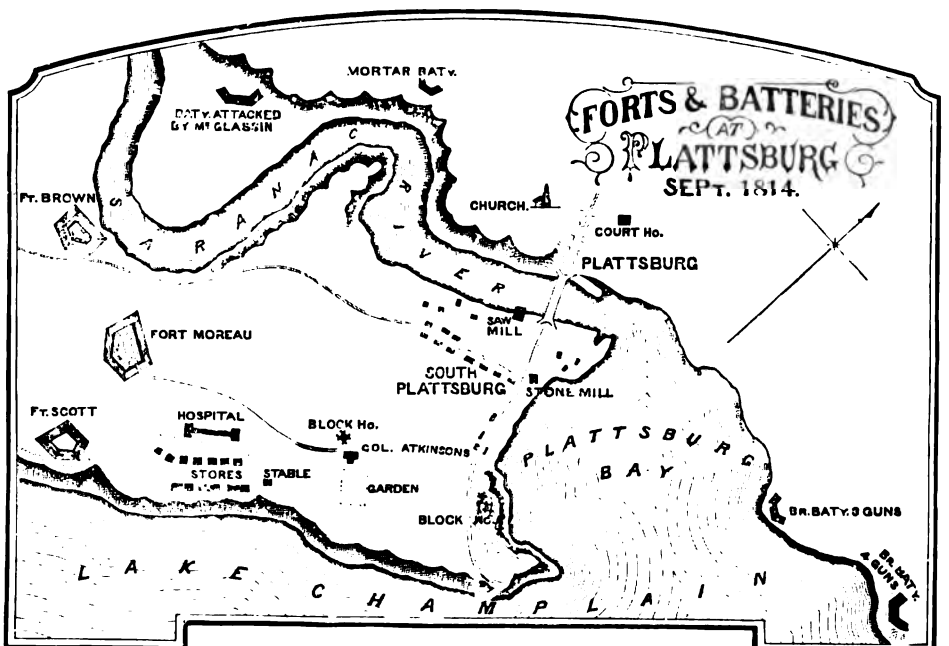
And now let Saratoga's name
Be niched in thy temple's fame;
By land or water be it bless'd,
By all admired, by all confess'd,
And while for Gates the harp's unstrung,
Macdonough's glory shall be sung,
For he the British Lion stung
On board the Saratoga.

Records of the Governor and Council of the State of Vermont. V. 6.

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Historic houses on Broad street

East of Winchell road over which British marched to upper bridge. (1) Winchel house; (2) John Nichols house; (3) Edward Hunter's inn. 1 and 3 originally wood now veneered


FORTS & BATTERIES
AT
PLATTSBURG
SEPT. 1814.
MORTAR BAT'Y.
BAT'Y. ATTACKED BY Mr GLASSIN
Ft. BROWN
SARANAC RIVER
CHURCH.
COURT Ho.
PLATTSBURG
SAW MILL
FORT MOREAU
SOUTH PLATTSBURG
STONE MILL
Ft. SCOTT
HOSPITAL
BLOCK Ho.
COL. ATKINSONS
STORES
STABLE
GARDEN
BLOCK
PLATTSBURG BAY
BR. BAT'Y. 9 GUNS
BR. BAT'Y. 4 GUNS
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

The Valuable Services of the Militia and Volunteers

BY JAMES AUSTIN HOLDEN

THE services of the militia and the land forces at the Battle of Plattsburg have usually been regarded and rated by historians as a negligible quantity in deciding the result. As a matter of fact, however, the land battle of September 11th deserves at least honorary mention in detailing the results achieved in that splendid double victory on land and water. That a handful of regulars, supported by undisciplined and poorly armed militiamen, not overenthusiastic to get killed, but still decidedly patriotic, could hold at bay for several days a force three times their number, made up of the seasoned and hardened veterans who, under the mighty Duke of Wellington, had fought with and conquered the hitherto successful armies of Napoleon and France on European battlegrounds, would seem in itself to be worthy of comment in the standard histories, if not of more serious attention by the so-called historians themselves.

The facts, to restate them for the sake of the argument, are about as follows: For some time an invasion from the north along the plans of the old Burgoyne campaign, had been threatened. Just as the time for this was ripe, and spies had advised the Plattsburg military authorities of its imminence, the authorities at Washington, in spite of the protests of the local commanding officer and ignoring Governor Tompkins, ordered Major General George Izard, with practically every effective regular, to proceed from Plattsburg to the support of Sacketts Harbor. General Izard and his command left Plattsburg August 11th, and his going was duly reported to General Prevost by the spies of the English, who were as thick in the American camp as those of the Americans were in the British.

The plans of the English commander were rapidly brought to a head, and his army of invasion of 14,000 men was set in motion, to cooperate with the proposed naval attack under Captain Downie, referred to elsewhere in this booklet. Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, the regular commanding officer in the American forces, had in camp only about 2100 officers and men able to do duty, about 1400 others being confined in the hospitals. Without waiting for any red-tape orders, New York's local military representative, Major General Benjamin Mooers, at once warned out the militia of the neighboring counties, those of Clinton, Essex, Warren, Washington and Saratoga being called out en masse. A general call for militiamen was also sent throughout the eastern and southern parts of the State, so that it is stated that for some days after the battle the roads to Plattsburg were black with companies and regiments marching, in many cases without arms or ammunition or equipments, to the scene of the conflict. News traveled slowly in those days, and it was some time after the victory had been won before it was generally known. Our sister state of Vermont responded nobly to the call for volunteers, sending of her best and bravest, General Samuel Strong with 2500 militiamen, who, according to the official papers of the state, did splendid service in the face of overwhelming odds. To Major General Mooers's call, about 700 of the Essex and Clinton county men responded immediately. This gave a total of effectives, regulars and volunteers, of about 5300 Americans as against 14,000 British.

It was the appearance of New York cavalry under Captain Sperry with 200 regulars and two field pieces, that caused the first pause of the advancing British army at Sampson's on the night of September 5th. The next day the general British advance began. At the first skirmish at Beekmantown, about dawn of that day, the

militia broke and sped toward Plattsburg, but the regulars stood firm according to the published accounts. The militiamen, however, soon gathered back of a stone wall, where a short but severe fight took place, until the overwhelming force of the enemy caused the retreat of Wool's small force of regulars and the militia. At Halsey's Corners, about a mile and a half from Plattsburg bridge, at eight o'clock in the morning, occurred the third encounter, when Wool's infantry and a small body of militia, backed up by Captain Leonard's two small pieces of artillery, caused a check and inflicted considerable loss on the foe, which finally, charging with the bayonet, compelled a hasty retreat of the small American forces, who however, saved their big guns for future use. Other skirmishes in which considerable loss was inflicted on the British occurred during that day. It is generally conceded that Aiken's boy volunteers of Plattsburg, who were stationed in the old stone mill, were principally responsible for preventing the passage of the Saranac by the light troops of the British. The passage of the upper bridge, which had been destroyed and the timbers used for breastworks by General Mooers, was ably disputed by these volunteer forces. Great efforts were made by the British to force a passage by this point, but it is stated that Mooers and his men stood so firm that the enemy could not cross the stream and therefore were obliged to go into camp. Prevost's loss since morning had been over 200 men, while that of the Americans did not exceed 45. Skirmishes and preparations occupied the intervening time until the 11th. On that eventful day the engagements on land and water began almost at the same time. Amid the shriek of shot and shell, the heavy columns of the British moved against the small forces of the American volunteers. At the upper bridge every passage was successfully disputed by the militia and regular riflemen and pickets. At the upper ford the Clinton and Essex forces,

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Site of Col. Thomas Miller homestead

Here, side by side with British officers, Mrs Miller watched the tide of battle

under Major General Mooers and Brigadier General Wright, after driving back with considerable loss the advancing British, were compelled to retire before the superior forces of the latter, but soon rallied and drew up in battle array on the higher ground, being supported by a part of the artillery and a large detachment of Vermont volunteers. Just at this time word was brought by a courier, afterwards the famous Chancellor Walworth of Saratoga Springs, that Macdonough had won and the British fleet had surrendered. This practically ended the land battle, Prevost retiring in great haste. As one historian puts it, " It was a wise determination, notwithstanding his number was overwhelming; Prevost was really in peril. He might have crushed Macomb and captured the post at Plattsburg, but it would have been at the expense of many lives without obtaining any permanent advantage. The British had lost the lake absolutely, and without any fair promise of its recovery; and the militia of all that region were thoroughly aroused."

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Home of Reuben Hyde Walworth (later Chancellor Walworth)
Saber marks visible on newel post of stairs. Shot holes found in recent alterations in walls, the shot hidden in outer walls

In this connection, it may be well to quote the following from the History of Washington County, by the late William L. Stone, regarding the value of the work of the militia at this time; his remarks being based on the opinions of the late Dr Austin W. Holden, the historian of Queensbury and Warren county, and those of Chancellor Walworth, whose views on the question had often been expressed to Mr Stone, by that capable authority:

Meanwhile the tidings of the invasion swept like a tornado through northern New York. Speaking of the manner in which these tidings were received, Johnson writes that " the War of 1812 was a dreary, dragging, dwindling contest, marked alike by the extreme apathy of the people." On the contrary, Dr A. W. Holden, in his centennial address — from which I have before quoted — says that " the militia promptly responded — Washington and Warren counties being almost depopulated of their male citizens." Of these two somewhat contradictory opinions, I am, however (with all due deference to Johnson, to whose valuable history of Washington county I have constantly given credit)

inclined to the opinion of Dr Holden. The success of the American troops was due, as Dr Holden remarks, in a great degree to the boldness, daring and bravery of the militia who, in the language of their opponents, "did not know enough to run," and who, from "the rent and bloody fragments of a signal defeat," gathered the laurels of a signal victory.

In writing history we are all too prone to reason from the effect to the cause, and so confirm our preconceived opinions, regardless of the facts. In summing up the case for the militia at Plattsburg, therefore, that they were poorly armed must be admitted, for the official reports show it. That they were undisciplined and not reliable in battle is also true, as it has been true of every militia organization in the history of the country, from the beginning until within the last quarter of a century. In this connection it may be said that one of the first persons to agitate the placing of the militia on a par with the regular army was that patriotic, talented, able and self-sacrificing officer, one of the greatest of New York's great war Governors, Daniel D. Tompkins, who, in his official report to the Legislature, under date of Albany, September 8, 1814, recommends a plan for placing the militia upon the same plane as the regular army as to organization, discipline and equipment, and at the same time provide for our national defense a standing militia army of about 20,000 men. It has taken nearly a century to bring about a realization of Governor Tompkins's ideas as to a State militia cooperating with the regular army. In view of the fact of the many disabilities which attached to militia organizations in those days, the dispraise which has been given them does not appear to be warranted, and the fact that they fought as well as they did, and accomplished as much as they did, entitles them to some of the honors which have been repeatedly bestowed upon the regulars and the fleet, for their share in this action.

The following taken from an official letter to Governor Tompkins, a copy of which was secured before the burning of the State Library, and while the Tompkins manuscripts were still in existence, gives Major General Benjamin Mooers's personal and official opinion of the acts performed by the militia at this time. The letter is dated Plattsburg, September 16, 1814:

On the first appearance of the enemy I issued an order to call out the militia of Clinton and Essex (40th brigade) and soon after of my whole (3d) division.

Their promptness in turning out both in Clinton and Essex entitled both officers and privates with few exceptions to the thanks and gratitude of their country, as was likewise the case in every other county and district which has been called on. A general spirit of active patriotism seems to have pervaded throughout. It was particularly conspicuous in the neighboring counties of Vermont, whose vicinity enabled them to yield us a most prompt and effectual assistance. . . .

After explaining the disposition of the troops which attacked at dawn, General Mooers reports:

There was a portion of the militia that could not be rallied and some of these retired immediately to their homes. Some part of the militia behaved on this occasion as well as since with the greatest gallantry and not surpassed in courage and usefulness by the regulars on that day.

Too much praise can not be given Majr. Wool for his cool and intrepid conduct and to the officers and soldiers under him. The artillery before mentioned were posted about three-fourths of a mile in advance of the Court House, though I had sent two expresses to have it moved up to our support, nor did it come into action until I called on Capt. Leonard, the officer commanding it, and earnestly requesting him to move forward to the turn of the road with two of his pieces about half a mile in advance of where he then lay. He had only an opportunity to make three or four discharges from each gun before we were obliged to retire through the village. Had he advanced as was expected to a place called Culver's

Hill about five miles out of the village, the enemy could not have advanced without a much greater loss.

The militia retreated over the River Saranac and lined the south bank and disputed the passage of the river.

After this I made my headquarters at Salmon River and until the 11th there was continual skirmishing with the enemy.

The militia had eight or nine miles on the river to guard. The most westerly pass is a road running north and south and a bridge across the river which we had destroyed.

Monument at Culver's Hill
Three miles north of Plattsburg

The remainder of his letter is taken up with a description of the intervening skirmishes and the battle of the 11th. General Mooers goes on to say:

Our militia have behaved throughout extremely well except on the first day and then not so bad as Genl. Macomb has represented in his official account which he read to me. He there mentions that all of the militia fled upon the first attack notwithstanding the exertions of the general and his staff. I wish the militia to have its due and no more. The small body of regulars, 230 under Majr. Wool, could not have sustained an orderly retreat and continued fighting before a heavy column of the enemy for nearly seven miles had not a considerable portion of the militia adhered to the front and flanks of the enemy. I am an eye witness that many stood their

ground as long as it was tenable, and continued their fire from behind fences, trees, etc., retarding the enemies approach and covering our retreat, some of whom instead of running too soon suffered themselves to be turned and passed by them and afterwards came in by a circuitous route. These facts are not only known to me but to officers who were in the action.

General Mooers being in command and on the ground, his report should be accepted as first-hand evidence and conclusive as to the work of the militia on this occasion.

Again a private letter from Governor Tompkins to Congressman Jonathan Fisk, not only sets forth his feelings as to the praise due on this occasion, but forms a fitting conclusion to this defense of the Plattsburg militia.

He says, in effect, that, had it not been for the militia at Plattsburg and their brave defense of that place and its approaches, it would have been in the possession of General Prevost, the regular forces being too small in number to hold it; the big guns of Prevost's army would have been in a position to force the American fleet from the land side; northern New York would have been part of the spoils of war; and the entire boundary line not only of New York State, but possibly of the country at large, would have been changed or modified by the terms of the treaty of peace.

Again he says in this letter, written from Albany October 3, 1814, after observing " the pointed neglect of Genl. Peter B. Porter and his gallant volunteers in the President's Message to Congress ":

In noticing the affair at Plattsburgh, too, the President seems carefully to have avoided the mention of New York or Vermont Militia. At Baltimore, where all would have distinguished themselves had not the enemy retired unmolested & safely on board without even being observed, the praises of the Militia are trumpeted forth. But it is said that at Plattsburgh the enemy was gallantly repulsed by a force, a part only of which was

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Headquarters of General De Rottenburg
Original clapboards showing on side

regulars. Now it is well known that one column of the British army took the Beekmantown road & that this column was opposed both in its advance & in its retreat by Militia alone, not a regular being opposed to that column. The regulars had their strong works to retire to & did retire to them upon the advance of the other column of the Army; whilst the Militia both in retreat & pursuit were exposed in the open field & suffered most, as will be seen by the ultimate return of killed & wounded of the New York & Vermont Militia & Volunteers. It may be said that Macdonough's victory caused the retreat of the British land force. Still that detracts from the praise due the regulars who were in works, more than it does from that due the Militia; for the one was exposed to field attack, & pursued the enemy in his retreat, & the other was in strong works & did not pursue.

Enclosed is an order of General Brown which shews that even the Common Militia of New York assembled in haste has behaved gallantly in the late sortie at Erie. The storming of strong works by Militia, certainly demands unbounded applause.

Now with the exception of Genl. Brown, the mention

Photo by Mrs Baker

Road on Cumberland head, overlooking scene of battle

of whom could not be avoided because he commanded the Army not a New Yorker is praised or even mentioned, & with respect to Brown, even, the honor of the mention is greatly impaired by coupling subordinate officers with him. Nor is the patriotism, Volunteers nor Militia of the State mentioned, altho', at the time the President penned his message, nearly thirty thousand of the yeomanry of this State were in the service of the United States, & without whom two of their armies would probably have been lost, & the metropolis of the State before this time have been in the possession of the enemy.

I am far from detracting from the services of the gallant Generals noticed by the President. It is of the injustice done to others by the omission of their names & services that I complain.

Should the complimentary resolutions introduced into Congress exclude Porter & his brave comrades, I am satisfied that our Legislature will feel themselves called upon to do him justice by recitals & resolutions that will give you great men at Washington a Rowland for your Oliver.

The Governor's official report, as set forth in a special message to the Legislature under date of September 27, 1814, referred to the action of the militia in the following terms: "It is, however, due to the militia of this State to acknowledge, that they have repaired to their country's standard whenever summoned, with promptness and alacrity; that they have cheerfully endured the hardships and privations of the camp, and that they have generally conducted themselves in action with the coolness and bravery of veteran troops."

After the Battle of Santiago Bay, it is stated that Commodore Schley said to Admiral Sampson: "The victory is big enough for us all." So in this Plattsburg matter, to observe whose hundredth anniversary this great function is being arranged, while laying the well-earned bays of victory and the laurels of praise before the enshrined memories of the fleet and the regulars, engaged at that time, let us also place a few memorials on the graves of the New York and Vermont militiamen. For it was their services, patriotic work and devotion to country, which saved New York and Vermont their northern frontiers and made possible the one hundred years of peace that have followed.

Halsey's Corners

The fence replaces original stone wall where fight took place

Suggestions for Exercises in the Schools of the State

WHILE many of the schools of the State begin their work on the Tuesday following Labor day, which this year falls on September 7th, others do not open until October 1st. This precludes the general observance of the centenary of the Battle of Plattsburg, by the schools as a whole. The following suggestions, however, are made with the hope that those schools which are in session may take steps to observe the celebration of this important event, which had such a far-reaching influence upon our country's history. Under the circumstances, no definite program can be proposed. The following hints are suggestive only and are given here in order that schools may use the plan, or any part of it, as local conditions may permit.

It is suggested that all exercises be held Friday, September 11th, either morning or afternoon, as may best suit the convenience of the school.

For the rural and elementary schools it is recommended that there be readings of selections taken either from this bulletin, or from the Plattsburg Commission's pamphlet, "The Battle of Plattsburgh, What Historians Say About It."

The exercises might appropriately be opened by the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner," the centennial of whose composition by Francis Scott Key, during the attack on Fort McHenry, occurs on September 14th of the present year. A working bibliography of works relating to the Battle of Plattsburg will be found in the bulletin and undoubtedly some of these books can be found in the school library. Reading of selections relating to this period, from any of these works, is also recommended.

As this centenary will also mark the completion of one hundred years of peace among the English-speaking

peoples of the world, it is suggested that the schoolhouses be trimmed with the goldenrod, our own State flower, and wreaths of maple leaves, Canada's emblem, thus symbolizing the unity of feeling and present amity existing between the elder daughters of Great Britain.

Following out the idea of President Finley, that the schoolhouse should be the civic and social center of the community, if some speaker in each locality could be induced to address the school on the topic of the day, it would lend additional interest to the celebration.

It is recommended that all the exercises close with the hymn " America," whose air is also that of the national anthem of Great Britain, making it especially appropriate at this time.

For the higher grades, academies and high schools, practically the same program is recommended with the addition of an essay or oration, by some of the older pupils, based upon some topic suggested by the bulletin, as " The influence exerted by the local victory at Plattsburg upon the campaign of 1814." In addition to the selection for reading taken from the bulletin, or the one issued by the commission, any of the ballads contained in this publication may be read; or Kipling's " Recessional," especially appropriate this year, may be substituted, or any other suitable poem or selection which may be chosen by the head of the school. There should be no difficulty in securing in the larger towns some capable local speaker to address the pupils on such an occasion as this.

For those schools in the neighborhood of any of the battlegrounds of the War of 1812–14, pilgrimages to such places on this date are advised, in place of the more formal gatherings. Such excursions may be arranged as will best suit the needs of the school.

The heads of schools may also arrange their own observances of the day, by taking such features as may

be best suited for their particular locality from the "Manual of Patriotism," issued for the schools several years ago, or the "Flag Book" published by the Education Department in 1910.

In fact, so long as there is impressed upon the minds of the pupils of this State that this date commemorates the birthday of a new freedom for our country and that from it came a renaissance of patriotism, a renewal of faith in ourselves, and an enlargement of our desires and ambitions in the way of higher citizenship, the way and manner of its celebration may well be left to the discretion of those persons intimately intrusted with the making of that citizenship which is to come after us.

In the War of 1812

Bright as a bit of northern sky
Lake Champlain's clear waters lie;
Steel-blue the lake and red the land
Where autumn red the oak trees stand;
Where all the countryside's aglow
With the men of General Sir George Prevost.

Rough, untaught in martial drill
Our yeomen had the hunter's skill;
Their squirrel rifles contest the way —
Lem Durkee's rifle was hot all day.

At night with prisoners two he came
To where our Yankee camp fires flame:
The captains questioned how 'twas done —
"How were two thus ta'en by one?"
Answered up stout farmer Lem,
"My masters, I surrounded them."

Francis Sterne Palmer

The foregoing ballad was taken from an old scrapbook by Miss M. K. Sperry of Plattsburg, and furnished to this Department. It was written by Francis Sterne Palmer, and originally appeared in *Leslie's Weekly*, many years ago. It is based on a tradition that one Lem. Durkee fell in with a party of five British soldiers and surprised them, compelling them to surrender before his leveled musket. Using the old stratagem of calling on imaginary comrades in the woods to help him, he marched the soldiers into camp as prisoners. On being asked how he had accomplished the feat, he replied, "Why, I just surrounded them!"

The Battle of Lake Champlain

[September 11, 1814]

Parading near Saint Peter's flood
Full fourteen thousand soldiers stood;
Allied with natives of the wood,
With frigates, sloops, and galleys near;
Which southward, now, began to steer;
    Their object was, Ticonderogue.

Assembled at Missisqui bay
A feast they held, to hail the day,
When all should bend to British sway
    From Plattsburgh to Ticonderogue.

And who could tell, if reaching there
They might not other laurels share
And England's flag in triumph bear
    To the capitol, at Albany!

Sir George advanced, with fire and sword,
The frigates were with vengeance stored,
The strength of Mars was felt on board,
When Downie gave the dreadful word,
    Huzza! for death or victory!

Sir George beheld the prize at stake,
And, with his veterans, made the attack,
Macomb's brave legions drove them back;
And England's fleet approached, to meet
    A desperate combat, on the lake.

From Isle La Motte to Saranac
With sulphurous clouds the heavens were black;
We saw advance the Confiance,
Shall blood and carnage mark her rack,
    To gain dominion on the lake?

Then on our ships she poured her flame,
And many a tar did kill or maim,
Who suffered for their country's fame,
    Her soil to save, her rights to guard.

Macdonough, now began his play,
And soon his seamen heard him say,
" No Saratoga yields, this day,
To all the force that Britain sends."

" Disperse, my lads, and man the waist,
Be firm, and to your stations haste,
And England from Champlain is chased,
If you behave as you see me!"

The fire began with awful roar;
At our first flash the artillery tore,
From his proud stand, their commodore,
A presage of the victory.

The skies were hid in flame and smoke,
Such thunders from the cannon spoke,
The contest such an aspect took
As if all nature went to wreck!

Amidst his decks, with slaughter strewed,
Unmoved, the brave Macdonough stood,
Or waded through a scene of blood,
At every step that round him streamed:

He stood amidst Columbia's sons,
He stood amidst dismounted guns,
He fought amidst heart-rending groans,
The tattered sail, the tottering mast.

Then, round about, his ship he wore,
And charged his guns with vengeance sore,
And more than Etna shook the shore—
The foe confessed the contest vain.

In vain they fought, in vain they sailed,
That day; for Britain's fortune failed,
And their best efforts naught availed
To hold dominion on Champlain.

So, down their colors to the deck
The vanquished struck — their ships a wreck —
What dismal tidings for Quebec,
    What news for England and her prince!

For, in this fleet, from England won,
A favorite project is undone;
Her sorrows only are begun —
And she may want, and very soon,
    Her armies for her own defence.

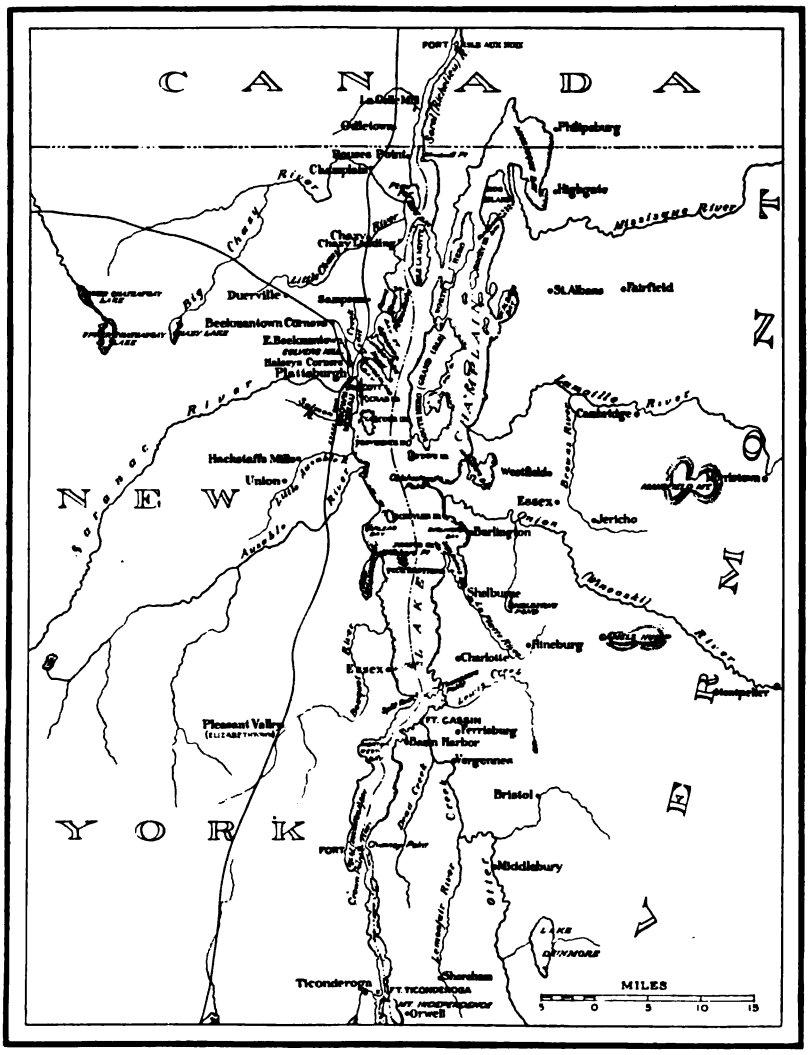
Philip Freneau

In Poems of American History, edited by B. E. Stevenson.

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Mess chest and captured silver

Left by British officers in DeLord house



The locality of the battle

Reading list

on

The Battle of Plattsburg

Starred titles indicate material specially useful in school work

***Abbot, Willis John.** Battle of Lake Champlain. (In his Naval history of the United States. N. Y. Dodd. n. d. p. 454–64.) Also in his Blue jackets of 1812.

***Adams, Henry.** Plattsburg. (In his History of the United States. N. Y. Scribner, 1891. 8:91–119)

Aldrich, Lewis Cass, *ed.* Plattsburg. (In the History of Franklin and Grand Isle counties, Vt. Syracuse, N. Y. Mason, 1891. p. 147–53)

Accounts of the land and sea battles, mainly from reports of Macdonough and Macomb.

Alison, Archibald. Expedition against Plattsburg in 1814. (In his History of Europe from . . . 1789 to . . . 1815. N. Y. Harper, 1843. 4v. 4:477–79)

Though old, has been reprinted and is still one of the most quoted accounts (from English side) of this battle.

Barnes, James. Battle of Lake Champlain 1814. (In Hitchcock, Ripley, ed. Decisive battles of America. N. Y. Harper, 1909. p. 173–79)

Good description of the battle and some biographical notes on Commodore Macdonough.

——— Naval action of Plattsburg Bay. (In his Naval actions of the War of 1812. N. Y. Harper, 1895. p. 209–16)

" For uncritical readers who are sufficiently pleased if the story of the war is patriotically told." *Larned, 1713*

***Brady, Cyrus Townsend.** Macdonough at Lake Champlain. (In his Revolutionary fights and fighters: stories of the first five wars of the United States from the Revolution to the War of 1812. N. Y. McClure, 1905. p. 258–71)

Correct in essentials, dramatic, American without being anti-British; particularly interesting to young people.

Christie, Robert. Battles of Plattsburg. (In his Military and naval operations in the Canadas. Quebec, 1818. p. 201–9)

One of the most important early Canadian accounts

***Clark, Byron N.** *ed.* List of pensioners of the War of 1812. Research Publishing Co. 1904.

Contains:

List of pensioners of War of 1812

Volunteers for Plattsburg from Vermont towns

Accounts of the battle of Plattsburg; from Northern Sentinel, September 13, 1814. and Montreal Herald, September 17, 1814

Extracts from general orders of General Alexander Macomb at Plattsburg, September 14, 1814

Commodore Macdonough's official reports

Commodore Macdonough's record of the force and loss of the American and British fleets

Clark, George Ramsey; Stevens, W. O. *& others.* Battle of Plattsburg. (In their Short history of the United States navy. Phila. Lippincott, 1911. p. 189–98)

Comprehensive account of battle and statement of its cause and effects.

Commemoration of the battle of Plattsburgh. 26 p. Wash. 1914. (63d cong. 2d sess. Senate report 471)

Addresses made and letters presented to the Senate committee on library at the hearing on the bill to erect a memorial to commemorate the centenary of the battle. Copies can be had from New York Senators or Congressmen.

***Cooper, James Fenimore.** Battle of Lake Champlain. (In Great epochs in American history . . . *ed.* by F. W. Halsey. N. Y. Funk, 1912. 11v. 5:79–89)

An abbreviation of his account in *History of the navy of the United States.*

*——— Battle of Plattsburg Bay. (In his History of the navy of the United States of America. Lond. Bentley, 1839. 2v. 2: 491–516)

Comprehensive and interesting account based on primary and secondary sources and interviews with participants. Roosevelt, however, considers Cooper less of an authority than James.

——— Plattsburg Bay battle. (In Putnam's Magazine, 13:49)

Crockett, Walter Hill. Battle of Plattsburg. (In his History of Lake Champlain. Burlington, Vt. Shanley, 1909. p. 265–89)

Comprehensive and interesting account based chiefly on Roosevelt's chapter in *Naval war of 1812.*

Dawson, Henry B. Second invasion of New York. (In his Battles of the United States by sea and land. N. Y. Johnson, 1858. 2v. 2:378–89)

Good account of both battles, identifying local places.

Elson, Henry William. Battle of Plattsburg. (In his History of the United States of America. N. Y. Review of Reviews Co. 1905. 5v. 3:36–38)

Short but comprehensive and temperate account.

***Hannay, James.** Expedition against Plattsburg, 1814. (In his How Canada was held for the empire; war of 1812. Lond. Morang, 1905. p. 314–28)

A partisan though recent and prominent Canadian account.

Hill, Frederic Stanhope. Battle of Lake Champlain. (In his Romance of the American navy. N. Y. Putnam, 1910. p. 189–92)

Brief but comprehensive account.

——— The Saratoga. (In his Twenty-six historic ships. N. Y. Putnam, 1903. p. 257–60)

Interesting though not very full account of the sea battle.

Hurd, Duane Hamilton. Incidents of the War of 1812. (In his History of Clinton and Franklin counties. Phila. Lewis, 1880. p. 154–56)

"A few incidents of the battle of Plattsburg not found in general histories."

James, William. Unfortunate attack upon the village of Plattsburg. (In his Full and correct account of the military occurrences of the

late war between Great Britain and the United States of America. Lond. printed for the author, 1818. 2v. 2:207–28, 461–69)

"In spite of uncouth style and bitterly controversial and biased tone, James still remains standard British authority on this subject (War of 1812)." *Larned. Literature of American history, 1736*

Kimball, Miriam Irene. Fleet built. (In her Vermont for young Vermonters. N. Y. Appleton, 1909. p. 238–43)

A textbook but interestingly written with emphasis on some points not usually made.

Johnson, Rossiter. Second invasion of New York. (In his History of the War of 1812–15. N. Y. Dodd, 1882. p. 260–67)

Account of invasion and engagement.

***Land and naval battles at Plattsburg.** (In Records of the governor and council of the state of Vermont; ed. by E. P. Walton. Montpelier, State of Vermont, 1878. 8v. 6:516–34, 537–38)

Official documents on the battles of Plattsburg, including the reports of Macdonough and Macomb and correspondence of Governor Chittenden of Vermont; connected by brief narrative; with other valuable material in footnotes.

Lossing, Benson John. Battle of Plattsburg. (In his Empire state. Hartford, Conn. Amer. Publishing Co. 1888. p. 427–31)

Abbreviation of his account in the *Pictorial field-book of the War of 1812*.

*——— Battle of Plattsburg. (In his Pictorial field-book of the War of 1812. N. Y. Harper, 1869. p. 854–84)

One of the most valuable popular accounts; full, compiled from primary as well as secondary sources and from personal visit to Plattsburg, by a recognized historical writer; copiously illustrated. An abridgment of this account will be found in Harper's magazine, July 1864, 29:147–57

*——— Battle of Plattsburg. (In his Story of the United States navy for boys. N. Y. Harper, 1881. p. 215–21, 400–2)

Short but interesting account of the battle. Appendix includes Siege of Plattsburg and Brother Jonathan's Epistle to John Bull.

——— Plattsburg, Battles at. (In Lossing, B. J. *ed.* Harper's popular cyclopedia of United States history. N. Y. Harper, 1893. 2v. 2:1106–8)

An abbreviation of his account in the *Pictorial field-book of the War of 1812;* a good account, illustrated.

Is also found in *Harper's encyclopedia of United States history.* 10v.

***Lucas, Charles Prestwood.** Battle of Plattsburg. (In his Canadian war of 1812. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1906. p. 197–212)

One of the best and fullest Canadian accounts.

***Macdonough, Rodney.** Commodore Macdonough on Lake Champlain, 1814. (In his Life of Commodore Thomas Macdonough, United States Navy. Boston, Author, 1909. p. 29–30, 134–217)

A very full account, based on Commodore Macdonough's own papers (in possession of the author), other primary sources and the most important secondary sources. Includes Commodore Macdonough's autobiographical account, and many extracts from letters. Appendixes B-L are copies of important source documents and include:

Macdonough's report of battle, including reports to him from junior officers, together with Secretary of Navy's letter transmitting same to Congress, October 3, 1814

Henley's letter and report on conduct of Brig Eagle

Yeo's letter to the admiralty, September 24

Pring's official letter to Commodore Yeo, September 12
Charges preferred against Prevost
Lea to his brother, September 21
Cochran and Colden letters and Macdonough's answers, concerning range of shore batteries
Congressional resolution expressive of gratitude to Macdonough and his men. October 20

***Maclay, Edgar Stanton.** Battle of Plattsburg. (In his History of the United States navy. N. Y. Appleton, 1893–98. 2v. 1: 603–15)

A comprehensive and temperate account.

McMaster, John Bach. Lake Champlain. (In his History of the people of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War. N. Y. Appleton, 1911. 8v. 4:63–68)

Good explanation of general situation and spirited account of engagement on the water. McMaster estimates the fight in Plattsburg Bay as " the greatest naval battle of the war."

***Mahan, Alfred Thayer.** Lake Champlain. (In his Sea power in its relation to the War of 1812. Boston, Little, 1905. 2v. p. 355–82)

One of the best accounts of this action; impartial, full, and by one of the foremost naval historians and critics who has used both English and American sources. An abridgment of this account will be found in Scribner's magazine, Jan. 1905, 37:111–115.

Meade, *Mrs* Rebecca (Paulding). Early service on the lakes. (In her Life of Hiram Paulding. N. Y. Baker, 1910. p. 9–13)

Tells of midshipman Paulding's ingenuity in the battle.

Morris, Charles. Thomas Macdonough and the winning of Lake Champlain. (In his Heroes of the navy in America. Phila. Lippincott, 1907. p. 226–38)

Contains anecdotes from Macdonough's life and a popular account of the battle.

New York State Plattsburg Centenary Commission, *comp.* The battle of Plattsburg: what historians say about it. Albany, Lyon, 1914.

Long extracts from accounts by Roosevelt, Palmer, McMaster, Lossing, Mahan and from official documents; also an outline of the plans for the centennial celebration.

New York (State). Governor. Public papers of Daniel D. Tompkins, governor of New York. 1807–1817. Military, v. 1–3. N. Y. 1898–1902.

Contains:
Hastings, Hugh. Lake Champlain. 1:93–96
Public papers. (See index)

Niles' Weekly Register. Baltimore. v. 7–8.

Frequent references to the battle, the events immediately preceding and following it. This is the best contemporary news periodical.

***Palmer, Peter Sailly.** Battle of Plattsburg. (In his History of Lake Champlain . . . 1609–1814. Plattsburg, Tuttle, 1853. p. 185–223)

Comprehensive and interesting account by a Plattsburg man, paying much attention to detail and local associations; a valuable addition to literature of the battle.

Perkins, Samuel. Plattsburg. (In his History of the political and military events of the late war between the United States and Great Britain. New Haven, 1825. p. 389–97)

Larned (Literature of American history, 1745) says this is "one of the best histories of the War of 1812." The account of this battle is full.

Redway, Jaques Wardlaw. Lieutenant Macdonough and the battle of Lake Champlain. (In his Making of the Empire State. N. Y. Silver, 1904. p. 174–78)

An account for young people.

Robinson, Rowland E. Battle of Plattsburg. (In his Vermont: a study of independence. Boston, Houghton, 1899. p. 283–89)

A good account of the battle and of Vermont's share in it.

***Roosevelt, Theodore.** Battle of Lake Champlain. (In Clowes, Sir William Laird & others. Royal navy; a history from the earliest times to the present. London, Low, 1899–1903. 7v. 6:130–42)

Interesting, full and less disputatious than his account in *Naval war of 1812.*

*——— Champlain. (In his Naval war of 1812. N. Y. Putnam, 1898. p. 375–99)

Too much space is given to confutation of James's estimate of the forces engaged; but the account of the battle is spirited and comprehensive. Bibliographical footnotes are given.

Royce, *Mrs* Caroline Halstead (Barton). Battle of Plattsburg. (In her Bessboro: a history of Westport, Essex county, N. Y. Elizabethtown, N. Y. Author, 1904. p. 255–80)

A particularly interesting account, full of local references.

***Seawell, Molly Elliot.** Battle of Lake Champlain. (In her Midshipman Paulding. N. Y. Appleton, 1897. p. 102–33)

Good historical fiction.

Soley, James Russell. Battle of Plattsburg. (In Winsor, Justin, *ed.* Narrative and critical history of America. Boston, Houghton, 1889. 8v. 7:396–400)

Brief description of the engagement.

***Spears, John Randolph.** Battle of Plattsburg. (In his History of our navy. N. Y. Scribner, 1897. 4v. 3:132–85)

Comprehensive, though rather diffuse, account of the battle, its preliminaries and consequences; a popular, distinctly American, though not unfair, account.

*——— On Lake Champlain. (In his History of the United States navy. N. Y. Scribner, 1908. p. 144–54)

An abbreviation of his account in History of our navy.

***Stevenson, Burton Egbert,** *comp.* Plattsburg. (In his Poems of American history. Boston, Houghton, 1908. p. 312–15)

Short paragraph on the battle and the following poems: Battle of Lake Champlain; Battle of Plattsburg Bay; Battle of Plattsburg.

***Tomlinson, Everett Titsworth.** Battle of Plattsburg. (In his Young minute-man of 1812. Boston, Houghton, 1912. p. 312–34)

Fiction based on good historical accounts (particularly Palmer's *History of Lake Champlain*).

Tuttle, (Mrs.) **George Fuller,** *ed.* The Battle of Plattsburgh. (In her Three Centuries in Champlain valley. Plattsburgh, N. Y., Saranac Chapter, D. A. R., 1909. p. 292-94.)

***Tuttle, J. E.** Battle of Lake Champlain; story of an eyewitness; retold by J. E. Tuttle. (In the Outlook. November 2, 1901. p. 573–77)

Witness was a boy of twelve or thirteen on farm overlooking the bay, and visited the fleet after the battle.

Wilbur, La Fayette. Battle of Plattsburg. (In his Early history of Vermont. Jericho, Vt. Wilbur, 1902. 4v. p. 256–83)

Accounts of both battles, bringing out the action of the Vermont volunteers.

Poems and Broad-sides

Historical interest is the basis of inclusion.

Battle of Plattsburg. Tune, Banks of the Dee, With Siege of Plattsburg, sung in the character of a black sailor, tune, Boyne-water. Broadside. Boston, Coverly, 1814.

Also in Star song book, N. Y. n. d. p. 6, and Plattsburg Republican, January 28 1815.

Begins:

'Twas autumn, around me the leaves were descending and
lonely the wood-pecker pecked on the tree

Battle of Plattsburgh. (In Stevenson, B. E. Poems of American history. 1908. p. 314)

See also Plattsburgh broad-side, Windsor, Vt. 1815. In New York State Library.

Begins:

Sir George Prevost with all his host
March'd forth from Montreal, sir,
Both he and they as blithe and gay
As going to a ball, sir.

Brother Jonathan's epistle to John Bull, 1814. (In Lossing, B. J. Story of the United States navy for boys. N. Y. Harper, 1881. p. 401)

Begins:

O Johnny Bull, my jo, John, I wonder what you mean?
Are you on foreign conquests bent, or what ambitious scheme?

Commodore Macdonough's victory (on Plattsburgh broadside, Windsor, Vt. 1815. In New York State Library)

Begins:

O freemen raise a joyous strain
Aloft the eagle towers
"We've met the enemy" again
Again have made them "Ours."

Broadside reproduced on page 90

Freneau, Philip. Battle of Lake Champlain. (In Stevenson, B. E. Poems of American history. 1908. p. 312)

Appears in full on pages 86-88

Hawkins, Micajah. Siege of Plattsburg.

Appears in full on page 39

Can be found in:

Lossing, B. J. Pictorial field-book of the War of 1812, p. 876, and on an interesting contemporary broadside in the New York State Library entitled "Back side Albany." Reproduced on page 43

Noble lads of Canada. (Broadside. Boston. Deming. n. d. In New York State Library)

Begins:

Come all you British heroes, I pray you lend an ear,
Draw up your British forces, and then your volunteers;
We're going to fight the Yankee boys, by water and by land,
And we never will return until we conquer sword in hand.
We're the noble lads of Canada, come to arms boys, come.

Of considerable contemporary popularity and frequently reprinted.

On board the Saratoga; written by a man who served on the Saratoga.

Appears in full on pages 68-69

Copied in Wilbur's Early history of Vermont, 3:283; also in Records of the governor and council of the state of Vermont, 6:527.

Scollard, Clinton. The Battle of Plattsburg Bay. (In Stevenson, Poems of American history. 1908. p. 313)

Appears in full on pages 52-53

Wright, N. H. Song of Macdonough. (In Historical magazine, 12: 245)

Begins:

The banner of freedom triumphantly waving
Displayed in bright colors the stripe and the star,
While the light-curling billows the warships were laving,
And the foeman was seen on the water afar.

Photo by Mrs Trumbull

Mantel in General Macomb's headquarters, afterwards home of General Benjamin Mooers

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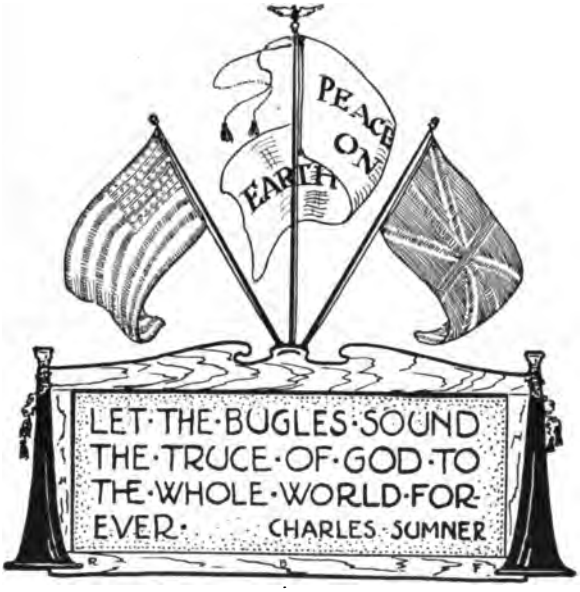
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